

# ŚRĪ ŚAṆKARA'S BHĀṢYAGRANTHAS: A SYNTHESIS OF SCIENCE AND SPIRITUALITY



By  
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# ŚRĪ ŚAṆKARA'S BHĀṢYAGRANTHAS : A SYNTHESIS OF SCIENCE AND SPIRITUALITY

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यज्ञं दधे सरस्वती

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## FOREWORD

The great philosopher Śaṅkarācārya lived in a time when sciences as we consider them new had not emerged. Modern sciences, especially physical sciences, came much later. This fact makes one raise one's eyebrows when one notices the title of Dr. V. Vasanthakumari's book "Śrī Śaṅkara's Bhāṣyagranthas - A Synthesis of Science and Spirituality." A curious reader would look back to see how many philosophers in ancient India and Greece had tried their best to incorporate the early scientific speculations in their thoughts. In this context we are reminded of Kaṇāda and Nāgarjuna in India and Aristotle in Greece. Later the rise of religions with their hesitations to change with the times had adamant opposition to science. In the West this opposition came much earlier than in India because organised religious groups under selfish leaders of vested interests took control of the society. In India, universal thoughts with their origins in the vedas as evident in the Samjñāna Sūkta of the Ṛgveda, the Īśāvāsyopaniṣad in the Yajurveda and the Bhūmisūkta in the Atharva Veda grew in the later literature and learnings which helped the religious philosophies also to assimilate the then prevalent scientific ideas. We may notice that until the 16th century A.D. India was ahead of all other nations in mathematics and science.

Spirituality is usually considered to be opposed to science as science is taken to be fully associated with materialism. Ātman is central to spirituality whereas we see a tendency among the protagonists of science to vehemently negate the Ātman (Soul/Self). But the category of substances (matter) and as such in India there was no need to alienate spirituality from materialism. The only intention of our ancient thinkers was that man should make use of his knowledge for the well-being of all, both in the animal and plant Kingdoms. Ṛṣis did not think exclusively for man, nonetheless a particular sect or community. In the west spirituality was safe in religious philosophies which were strongly against science.

Positioning in this background, we are comfortable with Vasanthakumari's present book. It is the result of her extensive studies in the works of Śrī Śaṅkara. During her research in connection with her UGC project, she chanced to notice the rational thinking of Śaṅkara and his use of scientific ideas to substantiate his ideas in Advaita, which holds that ultimately there is only one thing, Brahman. She has subjected all commentaries of Śaṅkara to her critical observation. The commentaries of Śaṅkara on Upaniṣads, Brahmasūtra and Bhagavadgītā are considered superb by scholars. Vasanthakumari has succeeded in bringing to light the wonderful ideas of spirituality and science in Śaṅkara's work.

Śaṅkara is an illustrious universalist who proclaimed the equality of all living things with the affirmation that all individual souls are only parts of one and the same Brahman and the absorption of the individual self in Brahman (Universal Self) is Mokṣa. However this great man has been the most misunderstood and misrepresented in his birth place, Kerala. He has been charged with the perpetuation of casteism against which he vehemently fought even at the risk of being ostracised by the community in which he was born. I hope Vasanthakumari's study will bring the true characteristics of Śaṅkara's teachings to the modern intellectuals.

I have great pleasure to introduce this book of my former colleague, Dr. Vasanthakumari, to the people who are interested in Indian Philosophy in general and Śrī Śaṅkara in particular.

Tripunithura,  
09 January 2013

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## PREFACE

As a philosophy Advaita Vedanta of Śrī Śaṅkara is the synthesis of the sciences—both material and spiritual—in their totality. This synthesis of spirit and matter is revealed through his Bhāṣyagranthas. Śrī Śaṅkara's statement "Jīvo Brahmaiva Nāparaḥ" i.e. the world (material) is Brahman (spiritual), itself harmonizes spirit and matter.

This book entitled *Śrī Śaṅkara's Bhāṣyagranthas: A Synthesis of Science and Spirituality* is an attempt to explore the hidden materialistic facts in the Bhāṣyagranthas of Śrī Śaṅkara and also to establish him as a unifier of science and spirituality. His teachings help us to understand the fact that both spirituality and science are not contradictory but complementary to each other because if one doesn't have the correct knowledge of matter (physical science) he cannot attain wisdom i.e. the knowledge of the spirit. As there is no conflict between knowledge and wisdom, it sees no conflict between materialism and the science of spirituality.

Among the eight chapters, the first one is the general analysis of the life and works of Śrī Śaṅkara. Second is the philosophy. The philosophical aspects are stated purely based on his Bhāṣya granthas. In the third chapter an attempt is made to establish Śrī Śaṅkara as a Vedabhāṣyakāra through his own statements in the Bhāṣyagranthas. The fourth chapter elucidates the specific features of Śrī Śaṅkara's Bhāṣyagranthas. It discusses the methodology applied by Śrī Śaṅkara to write his Bhāṣyas and also describes how he could make his Advaitic doctrines popular among the

common people through the poetic touch as well as the various nyāyas applied in his bhāṣyas. The fifth chapter illustrates the materialistic thoughts reflected in Śrī Śaṅkara's Bhāṣyagranthās. It also includes various scientific facts put forth by him in his bhāṣyas such as the Existence of the Brahman and its power, the theory of dissolution, theory of relativity, and the anatomical, physiological and psychological explanations. The sixth chapter explains the process of creation i.e. Pañcīkaraṇam and examines whether it has any scientific validity in the present era. The seventh chapter is based on how Śrī Śaṅkara can be accepted as the synthesizer of science and spirituality. It also tries to establish Śrī Śaṅkara's Bhāṣyas on that synthesis. The eighth chapter includes in itself the book in a nutshell. Apart from this, two appendices are also included.

I am grateful to Sukṛtīndra Oriental Research Institute, for offering to publish this book. I am highly indebted to Dr. G. Gangadharan Nair, Rtd. Professor and HOD, Dept. of Vyakarana, Śrī Sankaracharya University of Sanskrit, Kalady, for his valuable suggestions and blessing this book by writing a foreward. I also express my sincere gratitude to Prof. P. Chidambaran, HOD, Dept of Vedanta, SSUS, Kalady and Sri K.V. Sankaran, Associate Professor, Dept of Chemistry, SSV College, Valayanchirangara Perumbavoor, for giving valuable guidance and support. My sincere gratitude is also due to Prof. E. Narayana Kaimal, Principal and HOD of English, K M P College of Arts and Science, Perumbavoor, for his unreserved assistance and suggestions.

Kalady

Dr. V. Vasanthakumari

15 January 2013



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## Abbreviations

1. Ait. Up	Aitareyopaniṣad
2. Ait. Up. Sbh	Aitareyopaniṣad — Śāṅkarabhāṣya
3. B.G. Sbh	Bhagavadgītā Śāṅkarabhāṣya
4. Bṛh. Up	Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad
5. Bṛh. Up. Sbh	Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad — Śāṅkarabhāṣya
6. B.S. Sbh	Brahmasūtra Śāṅkarabhāṣya
7. Ch. Up	Chāndogyopaniṣad
8. Ch. Up Sbh	Chāndogyopaniṣad — Śāṅkarabhāṣya
9. Īśa. Up. Sbh	Īśāvāsyopaniṣad Śāṅkarabhāṣya
10. Kaṭh. Up.	Kaṭhopaniṣad
11. Kaṭh. Up. Sbh	Kaṭhopaniṣad — Śāṅkarabhāṣya
12. Ken. Up .Sbh	Kenopaniṣad Śāṅkarabhāṣya
13. Māṇḍ. UP	Māṇḍūkyopaniṣad
14. Māṇḍ. UP. Sbh	Māṇḍūkyopaniṣad — Śāṅkarabhāṣya
15. Muṇḍ. UP	Muṇḍakopaniṣad
16. Muṇḍ. UP. Sbh	Muṇḍakopaniṣad — Śāṅkarabhāṣya
17. Praś. Up	Praśnopaniṣad
18. Praś. Up. Sbh	Praśnopaniṣad — Śāṅkarabhāṣya
19. Ṛg. V	Ṛg. Veda
20. Sanat. Sbh	Sanatsujātīyabhāṣya
21. Sat. Bra	Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa
22. Tait .Up	Taittirīyopaniṣad
23. Tait. Up. Sbh	Taittirīyopaniṣad Śāṅkarabhāṣya
24. Viṣṇu .Sbh	Viṣṇu Sahasranāma stotra Śāṅkarabhāṣya

## CHAPTER - I

# Life and Works of Śrī Śaṅkara

India is fortunate to have eminent personalities like Vyāsa, Yājñavalkya, Śrī Śaṅkarācārya and so on. Among them Śrī Śaṅkara, considered to be the greatest philosopher of the world by many, was the most honoured and inspiring personality who propagated the doctrines of Advaita Vedanta for the welfare of the society. He instilled life and power into the spiritual heritage of India and rejuvenated the Upaniṣads to their sublime scientific status.

Śrī Śaṅkara was a spiritual genius and an illumined sage, a philosopher with a comprehensive rational and scientific approach to the investigation of truth and reality; a genius with a penetrating intellect and broad vision. He was a poet and hymnist with deep insight; he was a man of effective action and a great religious reformer. He was a multi-faceted personality. In his *Gītābhāṣya* Bala Gangadharā Tilak states: "Śrī Śaṅkarācārya was an extraordinary scholar and sage who by virtue of his supernatural powers established the system of Advaitic thought on the firm foundation of the religion of Vedas." He further mentions ". . . it is no exaggeration to say that the world has not known a sage and philosopher as eminent as Śaṅkarācārya." Sri Govindchand Pande states : "If

Vedanta is the national religion of India and its Universalism at the same time, and if its unique combination of spirituality and reason makes it a philosophical religion, it is to Śaṅkara, after the Upaniṣadic seers, that the credit should go."<sup>1</sup> In this connection it is worthwhile to examine the life and works of Śrī Śaṅkara.

## LIFE OF ŚRĪ ŚAṆKARA

When was Śrī Śaṅkara born? No precise answer can be given to this. We have many legends about the life of Śrī Śaṅkara. It is said that many miracles happened in his life. But without any miracles it can be stated briefly as follows: Śrī Śaṅkara was born at Kalady, a village near the river Pūrṇa, in a family of Nambutiri Brahmins as the son of Śivaguru and Āryāmba in the state of Kerala. There are references to this in the Śaṅkaravijayas and the Purāṇas. (Only Anandagiri's Śaṅkaravijaya argues that Chidambaram, a famous religious centre in Tamil Nadu is the birth place of Śrī Śaṅkara). Govinda Natha, a Keralite scholar in his Śaṅkaravijaya states Śrī Śaṅkara's birth place as follows : देशे कालडि नाम्नि केरलधरा शोभङ्करे सद्भिजो जातः श्रीपति मन्दिरस्य सविधे । . . . . श्रीशङ्करः पातु वः। According to various Śaṅkaravijayas he was born on the 5th lunar day of the first fortnight in the month of Vaiśākha (May /June) i.e. the second lunar month of the year, when the moon was on the 7th asterism namely the Punarvasu Nakṣatra. It is also believed that these details are suggested individually and collectively by the letters contained in the name Śaṅkara itself according to the Kaṭapayādi formula combined with a chronogram. Accordingly the fifth Lunar day



is indicated by 'Sam' (=5), the first fortnight by 'Ka' (=1), the second lunar month by 'ra' (=2) and the 7th asterism jointly by the entire name namely 'Samkara [= 'Sam' (5) + kara (2) = 7]. In Śrī Śāṅkaravijayamakaranda it is said:-  
 कटपयादिसंख्यानुसारेण अङ्गानां वामतो गतिरिति रीत्या, र इति द्वितीयं, वैशाखं मासं, क इति प्रथमं शुक्लं पक्षं, शं, इति पञ्चमीं तिथिं द्योतयतीति जगद्गुरुश्रीचन्द्रशेखरेन्द्रसरस्वती श्रीपादाः।<sup>2</sup>

On understanding Śāṅkara's extraordinary intelligence and discriminating power, his parents sent him to the Gurukula at the age of five. He learned the entire Vedic lore, i.e. four Vedas and six Vedāṅgas, Itihāsas, Purāṇas and all philosophical systems. He left the Gurukula with the blessings of his gurus and returned to his mother and served her all the time. He was always overwhelmed by spiritual thoughts and he wanted to become a sannyāsi with the blessings of his beloved mother. But she would not yield. He played a trick and gained his mother's permission for sannyāsa. Later he left Kalady and started his long journey towards the north and reached the banks of the river Narmada on the Vindhya Mountains. There he met Guru Govinda Bhagavatpāda, a disciple of Gaudapada and received formal instruction from him. He travelled all over India, participated in various debates and defeated his adversaries, the main opponents of Advaita Vedanta and silenced them. He refuted almost all philosophical systems for establishing his doctrines of the Advaita Vedanta. For the propagation of his doctrines, he established Maṭhas and wrote many important works. At the age of thirty-two he departed from this world. The place where he passed away is also in dispute.

## Śrī Śaṅkara's period

Indian philosophers and writers were so noble minded that there was no trace of an ambition for personal reputation in their hearts. So they had tried to avoid any mention of personal history in their works. Since every date in ancient Indian history is controversial, it is not surprising that Śrī Śaṅkara's date is also controversial. Several scholars have shown different evidences to fix his date between 6th century B.C. and 8th century A.D. The evidences in the Maṭha sannyāsa and the Śaṅkaravijayas fix the date of birth of Śaṅkarācārya in the 6th century B.C. Dwaraka Maṭha records his date as 507 B.C. to 477 B.C. Puri Maṭha, Kanchi Maṭha and Badari Maṭha fix his time as 509 B.C.<sup>3</sup>

Even though there is no official confirmation, the Sringeri Maṭha prefers 788 A.D. as Śaṅkarācārya's year of birth. It shows that it is too difficult to fix the exact date of birth of Śrī Śaṅkara. Dr. Sankaranarayanan states: "Indeed the great teachers of philosophy and religion, who have realized Brahman — Ātman, the unborn and undying, non-dual Reality, and are merged with that Supreme Reality, are not of any particular age, but of eternity."<sup>4</sup> However, it is generally assumed that Śrī Śaṅkara had lived between 788-820 A.D.

## Social and Philosophical Background of Śrī Śaṅkara's Period

The life and achievements of outstanding personalities can be assessed only by analyzing their social, historical, philosophical and religious background. Hence the life of Śrī

Śaṅkara also may be analyzed through the investigation of his social and religious background. During Śrī Śaṅkara's period Cāturvarṇyavyavasthā was an established fact and the Brahmin supremacy was deep-rooted. It was his aim to establish Vedic dharma. The dharma, as taught in the Vedas, is two-fold—pravṛtti dharma and nivṛtti dharma. Pravṛtti dharma embraces all the worldly activities (material) and nivṛtti dharma comprises of the spiritual enquiry and the methodical and systematic renunciation of all physical activities. Even though these two are different ends, Śrī Śaṅkara's life proved that his aim was to synthesize these two. It was through his inactive action he could pave the way for national revival and preservation of spirituality. But after the rise of Buddhism both the pravṛtti and nivṛtti dharmas suffered a set-back.

Buddhism was a powerful force in India before Śrī Śaṅkara and it revived the supremacy of the Vedānta philosophy. As a nāstikadarśana Buddhism influenced the Brahmins too. In large numbers they soon abandoned the Vedamārga and became nirīśwaras and its simple practical code of ethics and freedom from sameness of rituals and from the restraints of the duties of castes and orders (Varṇāśramadharmā) attracted many common people from the Hindu camp. Cāturvarṇya system was prevalent on the eve of the advent of Śrī Śaṅkara Darśana. By the organization of various religious (Buddhist) centres people devoted their attention to promote Buddhist studies and Buddhism became well established. This made Hinduism become weak and vulnerable.



Forgetting the basic philosophical unity, the different subjects and creeds started quarrelling among themselves incessantly. Of them ṣatdarśanas viz, Sāṅkhya, Yoga, Nyāya, Vaiśeṣika, Pūrvamīmāṃsa and Uttaramīmāṃsa are conspicuous. Among them the Sāṅkhya system is the earliest one and it is famous for its meticulous logic. Śrī Śaṅkara also commends the superiority of the Sāṅkhya logic. The Sāṅkhya school ascertains that the insentient Pradhāna creates, sustains and destroys the objective world and there is no conscious intelligent agent. This was entirely against the Vedantins. But their theory of causation known as Satkāryavāda has been recognized as valid by eminent Vedic scholars like Vyāsa, Manu and others and hence the Sāṅkhyadarśana is regarded as Āstikadarśana. Śrī Śaṅkara vehemently criticizes the Sāṅkhya system and considers it as its main opponent.

Even though yogadarśana accepts God, the basis of metaphysical and philosophical stands is the same as that of the Sāṅkhya. Hence the Vedantins thought that this school had also been following the same path. Nyāya - Vaiśeṣika schools are also opposed by Śrī Śaṅkara. Their paramāṇuvāda is vehemently criticized by him. The karma mīmāṃsa or purva mīmāṃsa established the dharma of pravṛtti on solid foundation and it reduced the search of the Ātman and the Jñānakāṇḍa portion of the Vedas.

Śrī Śaṅkara was born in an era when India was sinking under the weight of anti - religious sects and when the nation was in the grip of devils, gratified in misconduct and utter lethargy. He tried his best to eradicate these evils.

Tantra worship was common during Śrī Śaṅkara's age. People were not aware of the real form of it and they created new assumptions. It is said that five things are used in Tantra namely wine, meat, fish, posture and cohabitation. The ignorance of its real meaning caused many disasters. Misunderstanding its real meaning some worshippers justified the use of corpulent mundane wine and meat and the worshippers used them in their worship. But Śrī Śaṅkara protested against such tāmasapūja which was illogical, and also against the scriptures.<sup>5</sup> In this worship pancaprakāra has a spiritual meaning. It is related to antaryoga rather than bāhyapūja. It is almost the symbol of elements existing in the body. The main objective of Tantra worship is the practice of these elements. The Prapañcasāra and Saundaryalahari are accepted as his tantra works.

### Establishment of Maṭhas

Through the establishment of the Maṭhas in various parts of India and organizing Daśanāmisampradāya for spreading his Advaitic thoughts Śrī Śaṅkara became a practical Advaitin. After setting up the four Maṭhas he addressed the heads of these and asked them to visit different parts of the country rather than remaining in the Maṭhas (मठे नियतं वासः आचार्यस्य न युज्यत ।) and wanted them to assess the circumstances that prevailed during that time (स्वस्वराष्ट्रप्रतिष्ठित्यै सञ्चारः सुविधीयताम् ।).

There are different views regarding Śrī Śaṅkara's establishment of the Maṭhas. Even before him there were Buddhaviharas, Jaina Maṭhas and the like; and this might have

influenced him to establish vaidika maṭhas for propagating Vedic religion and philosophy. Many views exist with regard to this. Guruvamsakāvya says that he built four or five Maṭhas in Kāśi and stayed there for some time. The Kerala traditions tell us that Śrī Śaṅkara established four Maṭhas at Trichur itself and they were headed by his immediate disciple Padmapada.<sup>6</sup> However four Maṭhas undoubtedly claim to have been established by Śrī Śaṅkara. They are supposed to have been founded by him at the four regions of India— at Sringeri in the south under Sureswaracharya, at Dwaraka in the west under Hastamalaka, at Badari in the north under Todaka and at Puri in the east under Padmapada. In the monograph of P. Rama Sastri on the Maṭhas founded by 'Śrī Śaṅkara' it is pointed out that this four maṭha theory has been propounded first in Chitvilasa's 'Śaṅkaravijaya'. The popular notion behind the establishment of four maṭha theory seems to have originated from the fact that the orders of Daśanāmi Sannyāsins recognize and accept affiliation with only these four Maṭhas — the orders known as Puris, Bhāratis, and Saraswatis with Sringeri Maṭha; Giris, Aranyas and Vanas with Jyotirmaṭha; Āśramas and Tīrthas with Dwarakamaṭha; and Parvatas and Sagaras with Purimaṭha. No other maṭha is recognized by them.

### Works of Śrī Śaṅkara

In order to spread his Avaitic vision Śrī Śaṅkara has written different types of texts: Stotragranthas, prakaraṇa granthas, Bhāṣyagranthas, and Tantragraṇthas. His works are very lucid and mature in style. There are different views on



the early works of Śrī Śaṅkara. Some scholars argue that Brahmasūtrabhāṣya is the first and the greatest work and the minor works were written later. Some others opine that the minor works were written first and the Bhāṣyagranthas followed later on. They are full of logic and reasoning but still very clearly understandable. It is also difficult to conclude which books were written by Śaṅkara himself. Perhaps the works composed by some later authors who bore the traditional title of Śaṅkarācārya also might have added with them. Some selected works are being introduced as below.

### Stotra Granthas

A few people find a kind of inconsistency in a great philosopher like Śrī Śaṅkara being the author of flashing emotional piece of Bhakti literature. But there is no inconsistency. The very life of Śrī Śaṅkara suggests that his mind was not short of human feelings and tender emotions. According to him worship of Saguṇabrahman is the main device for realizing the Nirguṇabrahman. Śrī Śaṅkara himself practised the worship of Saguṇabrahman for the sake of standing as a model for ordinary people. There was no place for sectary. So he composed beautiful prayers on Śiva, Viṣṇu, Gaṇeśa and Śakti.

The authentic teachers of the Vedanta have held that Jñāna and Bhakti are not opposites but the two sides of the same coin, being but two aspects of the impact made on the human mind by the realization of the personal Impersonal Being revealed by the Vedas. According to Vedanta a

philosopher can be a devotee, and a devotee a philosopher. In the 61st verse of Śivānandalahari, he defines bhakti thus:

अंकोळ निजबीजसन्ततिरयस्कान्तोपलं मूचिका। माध्वी नैत्रविभुं  
लताक्षितिरुहं सिन्धुसरिद्वल्लभं। प्राप्नोतीह यथा तथा पशुपतेः  
पादारविन्दद्वयं चेतोवृत्तिरुपेत्य तिष्ठति सदा सा भक्तिरित्युच्यते॥

It means that a state of mind is called bhakti or divine love, wherein all movements of thought go automatically to the lotus feet of the Lord and stick to them forever, just as the seeds of the angola tree gravitate to the parent tree, the iron needle to the magnetic bar, the devoted wife to her husband, the creeper to the tree and the river to the ocean. Śrī Śaṅkara believed in the efficacy of bhakti in the attainment of the supreme Reality and composed many panegyrics. About 59 stotragranthas are attributed to him. Some important ones are introduced below.

### Śivānandalahari

Śivānandalahari, the inundation of divine bliss, is a work noted as much for its literary beauty as for its devotional fervour. The object of adoration in this devotional poem is Śivā. It consists of one hundred verses. The Supremacy of Śivā is stated in the hundredth verse of Śivānandalahari.

स्तोत्रेणाल- महं प्रवचि न मृषा देवा विरिंचादयः  
स्तुत्यानां गणनाप्रसंग- त्वामग्रगण्यं विदुः ।  
माहात्म्याग्र-विचारण- प्रकरणे-धानातुपस्तोमवत्  
धूतास्त्वां विदुरुत्तमोत्तम- फलं शंभो भवत्सेवकाः॥

It means let the hymn of praise stop now I do not tell lies. Oh best lover of supreme Good! Your devotees like Brahma and others deem. You are the first who takes a list of those who deserve to be praised. For, in estimating comparative greatness, they find themselves unimportant like a chaff of husk when rice is winnowed, and consider you to be the best owner of the highest of all rewards i.e. mokṣa. This stotra begins with the beautiful verse

कलाभ्यां चूडालंकृत- शशिकलाभ्यां निजतपः  
फलाभ्यां भक्तेषु प्रकटित - फलाभ्यां भवतु मे ।  
शिवाभ्या - मस्तोक - त्रिभुवन - शिवाभ्यां -हृदि  
पुनर्भवाभ्या- मानन्द - स्फुर - दनुभवाभ्यां नतिरियं ॥

### Soundaryalahari

It is the greatest stotragrantha of Śrī Śaṅkara. It deals with the cult of mother worship and is the most popular Sanskrit hymn of this type. It too consists of one hundred verses. Of them the first 41 verses deal mainly with Śrīcakra, which is called the abode of Śivaśakti and forms the special symbol of worship for the devotees of the Devi. The text also deals with the mantra of Tripurasundarī and the subject of Kundalinīyoga which are a part of the Vidyā. In this work the Divine mother is adored in her creative aspect under the name

Tripura means the mother who embodies the three bindus or creative stresses. The meaning of the dictum 'truth is beauty and beauty truth' is expounded in the hundred verses of the Saundaryalahari. The work begins with the verse:



शिवः शक्त्या युक्तो यदि भवति शक्तः प्रभवितुं  
 न चेदेवं देवो न खलु कुशलः म्मन्दितु- मपि ।  
 अतस्त्वा- माराध्यां हरि - हर - विरिञ्चादिभि- रपि  
 प्रणतुं स्तोतुं वा कथ - मकृत पुण्यः प्रभवति॥

which means united with Śakti, Śiva is endowed with the power to create the universe. Otherwise, He is incapable even of movements. Therefore, who except those endowed with great merits acquired in the past, can be fortunate enough to salute or praise you, Mother Divine, who are the adored of even hari, hara and virinci. The content of Saundaryalahari will be found to be highly technical. It deals with topics which are of not much publicity. Śrī Śaṅkara sets forth the worship of Devi in Śrīcakra in his Prapañcasāra and Saundaryalahari. This form of worship occupies a high place in the traditions of the Maṭhas established by him.

### Dakṣināmūrti Stotra

This stotra reveals both the poet and the mystic in Śrī Śaṅkara in the most embellished form. As a laconic expression of the fundamental truths of the Vedānta, Dakṣināmūrti Stotra forms a suitable text upon which the student may meditate and there was by construct, the whole doctrine for himself. Śrī Sureswarācārya wrote a commentary (Mānasollāsa) on this hymn to enlighten those who needed further help. It consists of ten stanzas, which begin with

विश्वं दर्पणदृश्यमाननगरीतुल्यं निजान्तर्गतं  
 पश्यन्नात्मनि मायया बहिरिवोद्भूतं यया निद्रया ।

यत्साक्षात्कुरुते प्रबोधसमये स्वात्मानमेवाद्वयं  
तस्मै श्रीगुरुमूर्त्ये नम इदं श्रीदक्षिणामूर्त्ये ॥

which means : to him who by illusion of the Ātman, as by sleep, sees the universe existing within Himself - like a city seen to exist within a mirror – as though it were manifested without; to Him who beholds, when awake, His own very Self, the secondless, to Him in the effulgent form, facing the South, to Him (Śiva) be the bow ! Śrī Śaṅkara realized the perfect teaching in his own person and he gave utterance to that silence of compassionate knowledge in these ten stanzas of winged words for the benefit of humanity.

### Prakaraṇagranthas

The word prakaraṇa is used in different meanings in the Advaita Vedānta literature. It may be a topic under discussion. In this sense it is also one of the six ways of determining the correct meaning of a vedic or vedantic text.

शास्त्रैकदेशे संबद्धं शास्त्रकार्यान्तरे स्थितम् ।  
आहुः प्रकरणं नाम ग्रन्थभेदो विपश्चितः॥

Prakaraṇas or Prakaraṇagranthas are elementary treatises on a particular science or subject. Śrī Śaṅkara also has written Prakaraṇagranthas to simplify the vedantic thoughts. About 42 prakaraṇagranthas are attributed to him. Only a few are being introduced below.

### Sarva Vedānta Siddhānta Sāra Saṃgraha

It contains 1006 slokas written in various metres and it is the quintessence of all Vedāntasiddhāntas. It commences with an invocation to his guru Govinda:

अखण्डानन्दमन्वन्धो वन्दनाद्यस्य जायते ।  
गोविन्दं तमहं वन्दे चिदानन्दतनुं गुरुम् ।

It is written in the form of a discourse between a guru and his śiṣya. The work deals with the topics such as: the four indispensable qualifications, creation of the five elements, Pañcīkaraṇa process, the nature of the Ātman, the different means of realization, nature of mukti and the like.

### Praśnottararatnamālikā

It is a prakaraṇagrantha written by Śrī Śaṅkara in the form of questions and answers and it is closer to the humane. It consists of 68 slokas. Praśnottararatnamālikā begins with the sloka :

कः खलु नालंक्रियते दृष्टादृष्टार्थसाधनपटीयान् ।  
अमुष्या कण्ठस्थितया प्रश्नोत्तररत्नमालिकया ।

which means who is the person skilled in understanding what is good for himself here and in the hereafter that will not find a fitting ornament for his neck, the source of voice, in this praśnottararatnamālikā or the necklace of gems consisting of questions and answers on matters of vital importance. The text gives more importance to humanness and moral values which lead to a systematic life. He defines life as anavadyam (without calamities).

### Pañcīkaraṇam

It is another prakāraṇagrantha, a short prose text in eight brief paragraphs. This text discusses how Brahman transforms

itself serially into the five rudimentary elements which, by admixture in different proportions, create the phenomenal world. This world exists as a fact of experience and this experience flows as three streams of consciousness—the waking (jāgrat), the dream (swapna) and the deep sleep, (suṣupti), the gross (स्थूलं), the subtle (सूक्ष्मं) and the causal (कारणं) states. Transcending these three states and encompassing them lead to the fourth state 'Brahman'.

Ontological enquiry leads us to the determination of the primal cause of the fact of our experience which is the world itself. Theory of Pañcīkaraṇa is adduced in explanation of the origin of the world from the one Reality that exists, i.e. Brahman. Though the text is very short, it deals with the fundamental theme of Advaita. It has been held in high regard and has been honoured by several Bhāṣyas.

### Upadeśa Sāhasrī (A Thousand Teachings)

This prakaraṇagrantha is the substance of all the Upaniṣads. The work consists of 22 chapters called prakaraṇas and is divided into two parts namely Gadyabandha (prose) and Padyabandha (metrical). Gadyabandha includes 116 prose pieces in three chapters (prakaraṇas); and it begins with the instruction for the seekers of liberation. It ends with the suggestion that as duality does not exist, the portions of the Upaniṣads regarding the oneness of the self should be studied extensively.

The metrical part consists of 675 verses in 19 prakaraṇas and it starts with the description of Brahnavidyā. It ends with



the message that false notions cannot be negated in any way other than knowing the self. Wrong notions are the causes of delusions. These false notions come to an absolute end, like fire, bereft of fuel when Ātmājñāna is attained.

### **Bhāṣyagranthas**

The heritage from which Śrī Śaṅkara synthesizes and systematizes the Advaita Vedanta philosophy is known as Prasthānatraya of Vedanta. The term Prasthāna means departure, the path which one should precede, i.e. by studying these three, a spiritual aspirant reaches Brahman. The Bhāṣyas written by Śrī Śaṅkara on the ten principal Upaniṣads, the Brahmasūtra and the Bhagavadgītā are acclaimed and accepted as the most valuable products of the genius of mankind. In addition to the Prasthānatrayabhāṣya he has written Bhāṣyas on Sanatsujātīya, Nṛṣimhatāpanī Upaniṣad, Viṣṇusahasranāmastotra etc.

### **Brahmasūtrabhāṣya**

Brahmasūtrabhāṣya is known as the magnificent and fully developed work of Śrī Śaṅkara. As the sūtras are written in very cryptic and comprehensive form, it is very difficult to understand their meaning without the help of Bhāṣya. Vacaspati Misra describes this Brahmasūtrabhāṣya as 'prasanna gambhīram' and also pure like gangodaka. The other names of Brahmasūtra are Vedāntasūtra, Bhiksusūtra, Uttaramīmāṃsasūtra and Śārīrakamīmāṃsāsūtra. It is concerned with the nature and destiny of the embodied soul. It is known as Sarīrakasūtra and hence the Bhāṣya is also called

as śārīrakabhāṣya. The language of Brahmasūtrabhāṣya is lucid and one can read and enjoy it as a literary work. Brahmasūtra consists of 555 sutras in four different chapters namely Samanvaya, Avirodha, Sādhana and Phala. The aim of Brahmasūtrabhāṣya is stated in the introduction itself, i.e. in order to eradicate the source of evil i.e. mithyājñāna and in order to acquire the knowledge of the unity of the Self, is begun a discussion of all the Vedāntavākyas.

अस्यानर्थहेतोः प्रहाणाय आत्मैकत्वविद्याप्रतिपत्तये सर्वे वेदान्ता आरभ्यन्ते । So Śrī Śaṅkara discusses the nature of the embodied soul.

### Bhagavadgītābhāṣya

Bhagavadgītā which is the part of Bhīṣmaparva of Mahābhārata was first brought out into prominence from the mass of Mahābhārata literature through Śrī Śaṅkara's Bhāṣya on it. There are controversies among Bhāṣyakāras, interpreters and thinkers about Bhagavadgītā Śāṅkarabhāṣya. Bhagavadgītā consists of 700 slokas in eighteen chapters. Śrī Śaṅkara's Bhāṣya starts from the eleventh verse of the second chapter. In the beginning he clearly mentions the view point of his Bhāṣya. He says: The text must be explained as designed to discuss the origin of blemishes like grief and delusion, which form the defects constituting the seed of the transmigratory life of all living beings. The aim of the Gītā is mentioned in the introductory portion of his Bhāṣya. तस्य अस्य गीताशस्त्रस्य संक्षेपतः प्रयोजनं परं निःश्रेयसं सहेतुकस्य संसारस्य अत्यन्तोपरमलक्षणम् । The purpose of the science of the Gītā is to set forth the nature of the summum bonum consisting in the total cessation

of transmigratory life and its cause. His Bhāṣya starts from the eleventh verse of the second chapter. In his Bhāṣya he reviews the different views of the ancient Bhāṣyakaras. In Gītābhāṣya Śrī Śaṅkara clearly points out that Mokṣa can be attained through Jñāna alone and not through the combination of Jñāna and karma.

तस्मात् गीताशास्त्रे केवलात् तत्त्वज्ञानात् मोक्षप्राप्तिः, न कर्मसमुच्चितात् इति निश्चितः अर्थः।<sup>7</sup> But he never negates karma, and according to him, karma means niṣkāmakarma and karmasannyāsa is not the total withdrawal of karma but doing karma without desiring its fruits.

### Upaniṣadbhāṣya

Śrī Śaṅkara had written Bhāṣyas on Daśopaniṣads - Īśa, Kena, Kaṭha, Praśna, Muṇḍaka, Māṇḍukya, Aitareya, Taittirīya, Chāndogya and Brhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣads. It is also believed that he has written Bhāṣyas on Śwetāswatara and Nṛsimhatāpani Upaniṣads. These Bhāṣyas are the primary sources of his doctrine of Advaita Vedanta. In the beginning of almost all the Upaniṣads he gives a hint for which purpose the text begins. He has quoted the ancient Vedantācaryas on several occasions to strengthen his own views. At the same time he had also refuted the opponent's view at many places. A brief summary of his Daśopaniṣadbhāṣyas is given below.

### Īśāvāsyopaniṣadbhāṣya

Īśāvāsyopaniṣad belongs to the 40th chapter of Śukla Yajurveda consisting of 18 mantras. The Mantras 14–18 of

Īśopaniṣad constitute the fifteenth Brāhmaṇa of chapter five of the Brhadāraṇyakopaniṣad. Īśopaniṣad is known as the Vājasaneyasamhitā but the Brhadāraṇyakopaniṣad is known as the Vajasaneya Brāhmaṇopaniṣad. In the introduction of his Īśopaniṣadbhāṣya, Śrī Śāṅkara points out that the mantras beginning with "Īśāvāsyam".. etc are not to be used in karmas for they are meant to reveal the true nature of the Ātman. ईशावास्यमित्यादयो मन्त्राः कर्मस्वविनियुक्ताः । He has written Bhāṣya on all the eighteen mantras. The Bhāṣya ends with the statement: karma has been conjoined with Upāsana, but not with the knowledge of the supreme Ātman. Ānandajñāna and later Śāṅkarācārya have written Bhāṣyas on Śrī Śāṅkara's Īśopaniṣadbhāṣya.

### Kenopaniṣadbhāṣya

Kenopaniṣad which belongs to the ninth chapter of Talavakāra Brāhmaṇa is a part of the Sāmaveda. This Upaniṣad is also known as Talavakāra Upaniṣad and Brāhmaṇopaniṣad. The peculiarity of this Upaniṣad is that it has the padabhāṣya and also a vākyabhāṣya and both of them are supposed to have been written by Śrī Śāṅkara. But as he has not written such a vākyabhāṣya to any of his Bhāṣyas some scholars argue that the vākyabhāṣya might be written by somebody else other than Śrī Śāṅkara. It begins with the purpose of teaching the supreme Brahman. He says : केनेषितम् इत्याद्योपनिषत् परब्रह्मविषया वक्तव्या इति एवमध्यायस्य आरम्भः। and it concludes with the statement that having abandoned the seed of transmigratory existence caused by avidyā, kāma and



karma, attains the knowledge of Brahman. He does not thereafter return to transmigration.

### Kaṭhopeniṣadbhāṣya

Kaṭhopeniṣad belongs to the Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda and it consists of six vallics in two chapters. In the beginning of his Bhāṣya he defines the term Upaniṣad: The formation of the word Upaniṣad is from the root 'sad' meaning to destroy, to attain or to enfeeble, by adding to it the prefixes 'upa' and 'ni' and the suffix 'kvip'. सदेर्धातोर्विशरणगत्यवमदनार्थम्योपनिपूर्वम्य क्विप्प्रत्ययान्तस्य रूपमुपनिषदिति । He observes that the book may also be denoted by the word Upaniṣad since it serves the same purpose. ग्रन्थस्यापि तादर्थ्येन तच्छब्दत्वोपपत्तेः At the end of this Bhāṣya he says : not merely Naciketas alone but also anyone else who, like Naciketas, knows the Self existing as the innermost reality in relation to the body in its true nature, and not in any other form than the inner self. न केवलं नचिकेता एव अन्योऽपि नचिकेतोवदात्मविद अध्यात्ममेव - नान्यद्रूपमप्रत्यग्रूपम् ।

### Praśnopeniṣadbhāṣya

Praśnopeniṣad belongs to the pippalādasākha of the Adharva Veda and is linked to the Brāhmaṇa portion. It is so named from the six praśnās or questions that it contains. The purpose of the Upaniṣad is mentioned by Śrī Śaṅkara in his Bhāṣya: This Brāhmaṇa begins with a view to explain in detail what has been discussed in the mantra portion (i.e. Muṇḍakopeniṣad मन्त्रोक्तस्यार्थस्य विस्तरानुवादीदं ब्राह्मणमारभ्यते । It means that while the Muṇḍakopeniṣadbhāṣya classifying

vidyas into parā and aparā, the Praśnopaniṣad tries to teach the means for the attainment of the higher knowledge. According to Śrī Śaṅkara clear mention of the creation originating from Matter and energy can be found in this Upaniṣad.

### **Muṇḍakopaniṣadbhāṣya**

Muṇḍakopaniṣad belongs to the mantra portion of the Adharva Veda. The term 'muṇḍa' or 'muṇḍaka' means head. This Upaniṣad is named as muṇḍaka because in those days it was used to be studied with strict adherence to the austerity which particularly insisted on holding fire on the muṇḍaka (head). Some scholars say that 'siromuṇḍana' is translated as shaving of the head. It also means shaving and removal of the errors of the mind. There are three chapters in this Upaniṣad comprised of sixty-four mantras in two sections. In the introduction of his Bhāṣya Śrī Śaṅkara states the purpose of this Upaniṣad. It is to describe in detail the two types of knowledge, namely, the lower and the higher and the means of their attainment. He says: The lower knowledge acquired from the study of the Veda and so on does not contain in itself the power to remove the ignorance which is the seed of transmigration whereas the higher knowledge obtained through Brahmavidyā, which calls for renunciation of all that is of the nature of means and ends, serves to destroy transmigration of all its roots. On it rests the entire teachings of this Upaniṣad. Ananda Jñāna and Abhinava Narayanendra Saraswati have written Bhāṣyas on this Upaniṣadbhāṣya.

### Māṇḍūkyaopaniṣadbhāṣya

Māṇḍūkyaopaniṣad belongs to the Adharva Veda and consists of twelve verses. Śrī Śaṅkara has written Bhāṣya on this Upaniṣad and the Gauḍapāḍakārika or Māṇḍūkyakārika and brings out the hidden meanings of each mantra with references from the Vedas and concludes it in his own inimitable style. In the sambandhabhāṣya he says: all what is said regarding the relation, subject matter and purpose in the Vedānta text is applicable here also. However, he deals with the purpose of the four prakaraṇas in the Upaniṣads. The four prakaraṇas are Āgamaprakaraṇa, Vaitathyaṇaprakaraṇa, Advaitaprakaraṇa and Alātaśāntiprakaraṇa.

### Aitareyopaniṣadbhāṣya

Aitareyopaniṣad belongs to the IVth, Vth and VIth chapters of the second Āraṇyaka of Aitareya Āraṇyaka, which is also known as Aitareya Brāhmaṇa, which in turn belongs to the Ṛgveda. The most significant thing is that it is the one Upaniṣad to which Śrī Śaṅkara has written an introduction that is more exhaustive than the one he has written to the Bhagavadgītā. The sambandhabhāṣya begins with the following lines. परिसमाप्तं कर्म सहापरब्रह्मविषयविज्ञानेन । He says that it starts with the refutation of the Jñānakarmasamuccaya and to enjoin the knowledge purely of the Self; and it ends with the statement : Having risen high from this world and having got all the desires fulfilled in the heavenly abode, he became immortal.

अस्माल्लोकादुत्क्राम्यामुष्मिन्स्वर्गे लोके सर्वान्कामानाप्त्वा अमृतः  
समभवत्समभवदित्योमिति ।

### Taittirīyopaniṣadbhāṣya

This Upaniṣad belongs to the Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda and is constituted by the seventh, eighth and ninth prapathakas of the Taittiriya Āraṇyaka. The Upaniṣad consists of three vallies such as Śikṣāvallī, Brāhmanadavallī and Bhṛguvallī. Before starting his Bhāṣya Śrī Śaṅkara gives salutations to the teachers by whom the Taittiriyaopaniṣad was expounded and he begins his Bhāṣya by introducing the aim of the Upaniṣad. He says: Here the knowledge of Brahman commences in order to get rid of the causes that are instrumental in the performance of karmas. Desire is the cause of karma. Like this at the end of the Bhāṣya he says : By undergoing great austerities consisting in the control of nature, internal and external and in the development of qualities such as dispassion forbearance and concentration accrues the result in the form of liberation.

### Chāndogyopaniṣadbhāṣya

Chāndogyopaniṣad belongs to the Chāndogya Brāhmaṇa, the 'Talavakāra' branch of the Sāmaveda. It has eight chapters; and Śrī Śaṅkara calls it Aṣṭhādhyāyī (अष्टित्येतदक्षरमित्याद्यष्टाध्यायि). In this Upaniṣad there are several streams of metaphysical and mystical thoughts. Through his Bhāṣya he unites these diverse streams into a single strand of Philosophy. It is the oldest extant Bhāṣya on the ancient Upaniṣad. The sixth chapter of this Upaniṣad explains the materialistic aspects that have been



explained properly. In the introduction he says: Here begins the short volume consisting of the lucid exposition, meant for those who are desirous of knowing its meaning in a concise form. In the sixth adhyaya the mahavākya 'Tattvamasi' has been beautifully explained through various examples. Here he explains the process of trivṛtkaraṇa. Various Upāsanas are discussed in this Upaniṣad. The last adhyāya declares that the Ātman alone is real and the knower of the Ātman attains all that he wishes. By attaining Brahman everything else is attained.

### **Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣadbhāṣya**

Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad belongs to the Śuklayajurveda, especially the portions constituting its mādhyamdina and kaṇva branches. Of all the Bhāṣyas on the Upaniṣads written by Śrī Śaṅkara the Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣadbhāṣya is the most excellent and exhaustive one. In the beginning of the first chapter he introduces the Upaniṣad. It contains six adhyāyas known as Āraṇyakas since it has already been expounded in Āraṇya. Being the biggest in size It is called 'Bṛhat' (बृहत्वात् परिमाणतो बृहदारण्यकं). In it he clearly explains how the great truth of Brahman – Ātman identity forms the main purport of all the Vedantic texts in general and this great Upaniṣad in particular :

तस्या इयमल्पग्रन्था वृत्तिरारभ्यते संसारव्याविवृत्सुभ्यः संसार हेतुनिवृत्तिसाधनब्रह्मात्मैकत्वविद्याप्रतिपत्तये ।

He also maintains by means of his powerful dialectics that the interpretations and views advanced by the Mīmāṃsakas,

Vaiśeṣikas and Naiyāyikas and the doctrine of Bheda–Abheda of Bhartṛprapaṇca are unsound and untenable.

### Sanatsujātīyabhāṣya

Sanatsujātīya is a part of Udyogaparvan in the Mahābhārata (three chapters from 2-4). This portion consists of ninety-nine stanzas which, fully discuss the philosophical doctrines. In this portion sanatsujāta instructs Dhṛtarāṣṭra in Adhyātmavidyā. It discusses the doctrines of Advaita Vedānta. The Bhāṣya begins with the following verse:

नमः पुंसे पुराणाय पूर्णानन्दाय विष्णवे । निरस्तनिखिलध्वान्ततेजसे  
विश्वहेतवे । नम आचार्येभ्यो ब्रह्मविद्भिः । सनत्सुजातविवरणं संक्षेपतो  
ब्रह्मजिज्ञासूनां सुखावबोधाय आरभ्यते ॥

In this work the Jñānakarmasamuccayavāda is rejected on the bases of various quotations from Daśopaniṣads and Manusmṛti. Śrī Śaṅkara holds that Brahman can be realized through the Jñānamārga alone but it demands in advance enquiries into the doctrines of the Vedānta. In the fourth chapter he explains the state of Samādhi: समाधिवेळायामपानं प्राणे उपसंहृत्य प्राणं मनसि मनः बुद्धौ बुद्धिं परमात्मन्युप संहृत्य स्वाभाविकचित्सदानन्दद्वितीयब्रह्मात्मनैवावातिष्ठत इत्यर्थः । The Bhāṣya ends with the following lines:

सर्वभूतेषु सर्वप्राणिषु हृदयकमलमध्ये अहं एव अवस्थितः  
सर्वभूतात्मतया एवं तावत् स्वानुभवो दर्शितः . . . . . चित्तवृत्तिदृक्सुखं  
तदस्मि अहं तदस्मि अहं तदस्मि ।

### Viṣṇusahasranāmastotrabhāṣyam

Viṣṇusahasranāma, the thousand- named praise of the Divine is a special form of devotional composition. It is a part of Śāntiparvan of the Mahābhārata. Tradition says that it was composed by Śaṅkara, one of the Kumaras and was transmitted to Bhīṣma who recited it in the presence of Kṛṣṇa to the Pandava brothers when he was questioned by Yudhiṣṭhira as – "In this universe who is that Being, who is the supreme Lord of all, who is the sole refuge of all and by praising and worshipping whom man gains what is good and attains to salvation." Viṣṇu is the answer that Bhīṣma gives to the enquiry. The Viṣṇusahasranāmabhāṣya has been accepted as a genuine work of Śrī Śaṅkara; and he wrote Bhāṣya on this in the philosophical way. In this work every one of thousand names of Viṣṇu has been logically explained. It starts with the following verse :

सच्चितानन्द रूपाय कृष्णायक्लिष्टकर्मणे । नमो वेदन्तवेद्याय गुरवे  
बुद्धिसाक्षिणे . . . . . सहस्रमूर्तेः पुरुषोत्तमस्य सहस्रनेत्राननपादबाहोः ।  
सहस्रनाम्नां स्तवनं प्रशस्तं । निरुच्यते जन्म जरातिसान्त्तै ॥

In this Bhāṣya the thousand names of Viṣṇu are explained in detail in the way of Advaita Vedanta. He says that as the universe has no existence apart from Brahman, He can be called as "viśvam". Here he states Paramānanda as mangalānāmmangalam मङ्गलानां च मङ्गलं सुखं तत्साधनं तज्ज्ञापकं च तेषां परमानन्दलक्षणं परं मङ्गलमिति मङ्गलानां च मङ्गलं मङ्गलानां च मङ्गलं । Śrī Śaṅkara also defines Samyagdarśana, the nature of japa etc., in this Bhāṣya. He

quotes almost all Upaniṣadic mantras, Purāṇas, smṛtis and the like. Viṣṇusahasranāmabhāṣya concludes with the following lines: If a man bows down his head in salutation to the Creator and Lord of all the three worlds who is endowed with limitless powers, the sins committed by him in his innumerable past births and numberless kalpas (creative cycles) are destroyed - सहस्रनामसंबन्धिव्याख्या सर्वमुखावहै। श्रुतिस्मृतिन्यायमूला रचिता हरिपादयोः। Today, among all Sahasranāmas, the Viṣṇusahaśranāma is called as the 'Sahasranāma'. Viṣṇusahasranāmastotrābhāṣya is widely believed to be the genuine work of Śrī Śaṅkara.

### Lalitā Triśatibhāṣyam

Lalitātriśati is a discourse between Agastya and Hayagriva. It begins with the verse

वन्दे विघ्नेश्वरं देवं सर्वसिद्धिप्रदायिनम्।

वामाङ्कारूढवामाक्षीकरपल्लवपूजितम्॥

In this Bhāṣya the terms such as 'sat', 'asat', prapañca, the nature of heart, suṣumnā nādī, six cakras and the like are explained. Śrī Śaṅkara states that the term 'rasa' is equal to Parabrahman. He concludes his Bhāṣya with the statement: "One who knows Brahman becomes Brahman itself."

ब्रह्मवेद ब्रह्मैव भवति।

### Adhyātmapaṭalavivaraṇam

It has been considered as a genuine work of Śrī Śaṅkara. Govind Chand Pandey states: "In its ideas, style of argument,



directness and simplicity of language, preference for brief quotes from ancient works, concept of doṣa and Jñāna, absence of benediction etc, the work is consistent with the authentic writings of Śaṅkara."<sup>8</sup> It is a Bhāṣya on the eighth paṭala (Adhyātmāpaṭala) of Āpasthambīyadharmasūtra. Adhyātmāpaṭalavivaraṇam is the Bhāṣya on the sūtra आध्यत्मिकान् योगान् अनुतिष्ठेत् । upto अक्रोधो हर्षो । (sūtra 1-14). In this Bhāṣya akrodha, aharṣa, amoha, etc. are considered as yogasādhana. Śrī Śaṅkara discusses the doctrine of karma and the different ways of karmakṣaya. It can be attained only from Jñāna. The purpose of his Bhāṣya is clearly mentioned as follows आत्मज्ञानवतः पण्डितस्य धर्माधर्मक्षये क्षेमप्राप्तिरिह विवक्षितेत्यात्मज्ञानार्थमध्यात्मपटलमारभ्यते, कर्मक्षयहेतुत्वसामान्यात् ।

### Tantra works

Prapañcasāra is regarded as a Tantra work written by Śrī Śaṅkara. It is a compendium of Tāntric lore and practices. It consists of thirty three paṭalas. It is said that Śrī Śaṅkara composed this work as a sārasamgraha, culling out essentials from the old tradition of Prapañcāgama.

### Observations

The Advaita Vedānta darśana owes its systematization as a formidable doctrine to Gaudapada who wrote Māṇḍukyakarika on the Māṇḍukyopaniṣad and Śrī Śaṅkara. Even though controversies are existing about the life, time and works of Śrī Śaṅkara, his style of writing, simplicity of language, etc,

denote that he occupies a very prominent position between the classical and early medieval ages. A large number of works are attributed to him. But a few are accepted as authentic. However, his Bhāṣyas on the prasthānatraya and a few independent treatises form the bed-rock on which the later advaitins built their edifices.

### Notes and references

1. Govind Chandra Pande, *Life and Thought of Śaṅkarācārya*, p.380.
2. Śrī Śaṅkaravijayamakaranda (Verse 43)
3. Swami Gyananda Saraswati - *Adi Śaṅkara, Life and Philosophy*- p. 49.
4. S. Sankara Nayarayanan - *Śrī Śaṅkara* - p. 270.
5. *Ādi Śaṅkara, Life and Philosophy* - p. 85
6. *Śrī Śaṅkara* - p. 290.
7. B. G. Sbh. Introduction
8. *Life and Thought of Śaṅkarācārya*, p.110

## CHAPTER - 2

# Philosophy of Śrī Śaṅkara

The principles of Śrī Śaṅkara constitute a homogeneous system which he expressed without distinctions. This system is common ground between the traditional and most modern explanations of his philosophy. Here Śrī Śaṅkara's philosophical ideas are elucidated on the basis of his Bhāṣyagranthas alone which are considered to be the most authoritative even today. The present study is on that philosophy.

### World / Vivarta

The world of multiplicity is a matter of our day-to-day experience. It is necessary to offer an explanation as to how Brahman, the one without a second, appears, as this world of multiple names and forms. Scholars hold different views on Śrī Śaṅkara's concept of the world. Studies reveal that without denying the vast phenomenal creations, Śrī Śaṅkara resorts to the process of transformation; in so far as this can be made use of in the worship of the qualified Brahman. According to him the universe is an empirical reality in which we live and function and it cannot be brushed aside, nor can we ignore our own existence in and out of the universe. It is manifested through name and form that are associated with

diverse agents and experiences, which provide the support for karma. In his *Lalitātriśatibhāṣya* the term *prapañca* is explained as : प्रपञ्च्यते विस्तार्यते विवर्तत इति प्रपञ्चः ।<sup>1</sup> In his *Chāndogyopaniṣad bhāṣya*, he states: It is not the existence nor the non-existence of the universe, that is meant to be expounded here, since as a matter of priority.

न च सत्वमसत्त्वं वेह जगतः प्रतिपिपादयिषितम्<sup>2</sup>

Śrī Śaṅkara explains the reality of the world through the examples of *śukti-rajata* and *rajju-sarpa*. Perceiving silver in nacre in the moonlight and a snake in a rope in insufficient light are taken as examples. In both cases there is an erroneous perception brought about by the impression of silver and snake. This is from an earlier idea of the same, now superimposed upon *śuktikā* and *rajju* under conditions favourable to the error. This superimposition is called *adhyāsa* which is responsible for the *mithyājñāna* that the object perceived is *rajata* or *sarpa*. Here the *rajata* or *sarpa* perceived is neither 'sat' nor 'asat' and it is *anirvacanīya*. He defines *adhyāsa* as अतस्मिन् तद्बुद्धिः । and स्मृतिरूपः परत्र पूर्वदृष्टावभासः । Through the right knowledge this erroneous perception can be removed and it is *apavāda*. Śrī Śaṅkara defines *apavāda* as follows: अपवादो नाम यत्र कस्मिंश्चिद्वस्तुनि पूर्वनिविष्टायां मिथ्याबुद्धौ निश्चितायां पश्चादुपजायमाना यथार्था बुद्धिः पूर्वनिविष्टा मिथ्याबुद्धेर्निवर्तिका भवति ।<sup>3</sup> For instance, through the right perception under the right circumstances of bright light the snake or the rope which is mistaken in semi darkness, is being removed and its substratum, the *rajju* (rope) is seen as it is and it is *apavāda*.



The basic cause of erroneous perception is termed as *ajñāna* and is endowed with two *śaktis*, namely *Āvaraṇa śakti* and *Vikṣepa śakti*. *Ajñāna* veils the true nature of *śūktikā* and *raju* and shows up *rajata* and *sarpa* in their place by apparently transforming them. Such an apparently transformed object is called *vivarta*. The *vivartavāda* views the effect, as not an actual object but an appearance or construction due to our imagination conditioned by *Avidyā*. Since this *ajñāna* does not make the *śūktikā* and the *sarpa* totally disappear from view, but only makes them appear as something else, it is described as *bhāvarūpa* or existent. Śrī Śaṅkara had to develop the *Brahmavivartavāda* in the context of *Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika* *asatkāryavāda*, *prakṛti-pariṇāmavāda* of *Sāṃkhya* and *Sūnyavāda* of *Mahāyāna*.

### Ātman-Brahman

The term *Ātmā* comes from the root 'at' to move. It is also derived from the root 'an' — to breathe. Both meanings intend to the conclusion that it is the life- change. This *Ātmā* or living is of ceaseless motion— that alone is real. Śrī Śaṅkara explains the *Ātmā* in many places. 'Self' indeed is the inner consciousness of the entire creature and that it is self knowing by ascertaining the Self to be of that nature itself. It is bodiless and all-pervasive like *ākāśa* should be realized as Brahman

आत्मा हि नाम सर्वजन्तूनां प्रत्यक्चेतनः स्वसंवेद्यः प्रसिद्धस्तेनैव स्वरूपेणोन्नीत - अशरीरा व्योमवत्सर्वगत आत्मा ब्रह्मेत्यवगन्तव्यम् ।<sup>4</sup>

The individual self that has entered into creation is nothing but the Self that transcends mundane existence. Śrī

Śaṅkara defines the term Ātmā in another way: That is known as the Ātmā which pervades every being, which sustains every being, which enjoys every being and which remains always the same.

यच्चाप्नोति यदादत्ते यच्चात्ति विषयानिह ।

यच्चास्य सन्ततो भावान् तस्मात् आत्मेति गीयते ।<sup>5</sup>

The term Brahman is derived from the root 'br̥h' which means to expand or to spread over वृहत्वात् वृंहणत्वात् चैव आत्मा ब्रह्मेति गीयते। Brahman is the upādānakāraṇa and nimitta kāraṇa of the world. It is indestructible, i.e. not subject to any of the senses of knowledge. It is the higher knowledge by which the indestructible of the above kind is attained. Though Brahman is Nirguṇa, for the sake of meditation, qualities are seen to be ascribed to it. Brahman is having full force and is capable of creating varieties. परिपूर्णशक्तिकं तु ब्रह्म ।<sup>6</sup> It is said that one who wishes to live long should meditate upon Brahman especially on its attributes of longevity तस्मादायुष्कामेन आयुर्गुणेनोपास्यं ब्रह्मेत्यर्थः।

## Jīva

The word Jīva means that which lives (has sentience), controls the body, and holds together the organs and senses. जीवो हि नाम चेतनः शरीराध्यक्षः ।<sup>7</sup> The soul on the plane of ignorance, desire and action conditioned by the body and senses, is said to be a transmigration being, designated as jīva. अविद्याकर्मविशिष्टकार्यकारणोपाधिरात्मसंसारो जीव उच्यते ।<sup>8</sup> When the Self becomes a limiting adjunct with the power of eternal and unsurprised knowledge, it is called Īśwara. Jīva is

different from God and it is attached to action. It is the enjoyer. भोक्ता कर्मफलसंबन्धी देहे तद्विलक्षणो जीवः।' It is a mere resemblance of the Deity like the reflection of a man in a mirror or that of the Sun in water.

जीवो हि नाम देवतायाः आभासमात्रम् ।

There are references showing Śrī Śaṅkara accepting the concept of rebirth. For example in the sixth chapter of his Chāndogyopaniṣadbhāṣya, he says that the creatures that are just born seem to entertain a liking for breast-feeding and also entertain fear. This leads to the inference that they have the memory of the experience of breast-feeding, as that of fear in their previous birth.

जातमात्राणां च जन्तूनां स्तन्याभिलाषभयादिदर्शनाच्चातीत-  
जन्मान्तरानुभूतस्तनपानदुःखानुभव स्मृतिर्गम्यते ।

Jīva has taken the entire universe as the means to accomplish the results of its action; and to accomplish this object it goes from one body to another.

मृत्वा पुनर्देहजालमाविशति यस्मात् मूलादुत्थाय देहमाविशति जीवः।<sup>10</sup> A person who has no Ātmajñāna enters into the meshes of the body after death i.e. rising from its own source the jīva enters into another body. Knowledge, action and past experiences are the means of attaining another body as well as of enjoying the fruits of past actions. Therefore virtuous and evil deeds are the causes of ever-recurring birth and death.<sup>11</sup>

## Māyā

The doctrine of Māyā is the key concept of Śrī Śaṅkara's Advaita Vedānta. He defines Maya in different ways. It is the power of Brahman responsible for the illusory projection of this world. Without Māyā the creation of God cannot have any meaning in as much as God cannot act without His power of Maya; and without that latent state, the absence of birth for the freed souls cannot be explained. Māyā, i.e. dissimulation, some sort of false deportment by which a man appears outwardly in one manner and acts in another. माया नाम बहिरन्यथात्मानं प्रकाश्यान्यथैव कार्यं करोति सा माया मिथ्याचाररूपा।<sup>12</sup> It is surely not manifestable for it can neither be ascertained as real nor as unreal. The power of Māyā has to be admitted. Its presence makes birth, death, etc. possible, and its cessation brings about liberation. In his Gītābhāṣya Māyā is termed as prakṛti which is God's causal power to produce transformation. The essence of Māyā has three constituents. (Satva, Rajas and Tamas).<sup>13</sup> According to Śrī Śaṅkara the world is neither real nor unreal; it is Māyā, that is, anirvacanīya. Hence Māyā can be defined as a positive power or Śakti; and never can it be linked to mere blankness. न क्षरति अत्मज्ञानेन विना मुक्तेः न नश्यतीति अक्षरं कूटस्थशब्दवाच्यं माया।

## Doctrine of Karma

As an intellect Śrī Śaṅkara never hesitates karma and he reveals the significance of karma. He ascertains that karmas are to be performed for the rise of knowledge and the



purification of mind. While performing karma alone, such as agnihotra as enjoined by the scriptures, one should desire to live. Therefore rites are enjoined only for those who have such defects as ignorance but not for one who possesses non-dual knowledge. तस्मादविद्यादिदोषवत् एव कर्माणि विधीयन्ते नाद्वैतज्ञानवत्। Karma has power to produce, to acquire, to transform and to purify and its scope does not involve any thing further than these, since no such thing is known in common parlance. उत्पत्त्याप्तिविकारसंस्कारा हि कर्मसामर्थ्यस्य विषयाः।<sup>14</sup>

According to Śrī Śaṅkara, Upāsana is a part of karma, the source of self-realization. It aims at establishing a continuous flow of similar modifications for the mind in relation to some object as presented by the scriptures. These Upāsanas are helpful to the non-dualist realization, by way of presenting a glimpse of reality of Brahman through the purification of the mind and they are easy to practise because they are based on some palpable objects. He says : By the term 'Karma' we should understand not merely rituals like Agnihotra but also practices such as celibacy, austerity, adherence to truth, control of the inner and outer organs, non-violence, etc. which are well-known as pertaining to other stages of life.<sup>15</sup> Hence, according to Śrī Śaṅkara, karma means Niṣkāma karma. He believes that selfish desires and passions are impediments to Ātmāsākṣātkāra. Niṣkāmakarma purgates one from these impediments; and it paves the way to Mokṣa.

### Ajñāna / Jñāna

In Śrī Śaṅkara's view, Ajñāna is non-discriminative cognition, erroneous notions regarding duties and other actions.

अज्ञानं च अविवेकज्ञानं कर्तव्याकर्तव्यादिविषयमिथ्याप्रत्ययः।<sup>16</sup> It does not mean just ignorance or absence of knowledge but a positive, something responsible for conscious activities pertaining to all fields except that of the knowledge of the unity of Jīva with Brahman. It is called positive simply because it is not a mere negation (abhāva). He speaks of Ajñāna not as a power but as a state-avasthā, an undesirable state of passion which afflicts the individual. Ajñāna comprises three guṇas- satva, rajas and tamas, the permutation and combination of which gives rise to this creation. It can be destroyed by Jñāna, knowledge of the ultimate unity of the Jivātmā and the Paramātmā. It is bhāvarūpa. Since it is felt or experienced, as when we say "I do not know anything, I am an ignorant person. Even though it is bhāvarūpa, its reality is not given the status of 'sat' (that which exists) since it can be destroyed by knowledge.

Śrī Śaṅkara puts before us the Brahmavidyā, called the Upaniṣad as the supreme secret of all knowledge. ब्रह्मविद्योपनिषत्सर्वाभ्यो विद्याभ्यः परमरहस्यं दर्शितम्। While explaining the term ज्ञानयोगव्यवस्थितिः, he defines the term Jñāna thus:- ज्ञानं शास्त्रतः आचार्यतश्च आत्मादिपदार्थानां अवगमः।<sup>17</sup> Knowledge here means the understanding of entities like the Self, gathered from the śāstra and the teacher, the one bestowed with the vivid realization of these truths, preceded by yogic introversion.

### Sattātraya

In Advaita Vedānta three types of sattas are accepted – Vyāvahārika, Pāramārthika and Prātibhāsika. When we

wrongly perceive the silver in a conch shell or snake on a rope, it is *prātibhāsikasattā*. Since the world is real for practical purposes, it is *vyāvahārikasattā*. But the reality that Brahman is the highest and unchanging truth is *pāramārthikasattā*. ब्रह्मैवेकं परमार्थसत्यमिति वेदानुशासनं। But Śaṅkara gives importance to the *pāramārthikā* and *vyāvahārika*. He says: दृष्टिरिति द्विविधा लौकिकी पारमार्थिकी चेति।<sup>18</sup> i.e. sight is of two kinds viz; ordinary (*laukikī*) and real (*pāramārthika*). The ordinary sight is tinged by the objects seen by the eye and has certainly a beginning. It appears to be connected with the eternal sight of the Self. But the sight of the Self (*pāramārthika*), being like the heat and light of fire, is of the very nature of the seer and has, therefore neither beginning nor end. Since it appears to be connected with the ordinary sight (*laukika dr̥ṣṭi*) which is produced; and by which it is conditioned, it is described as the seer and also as differentiated into seer and sight. But he negates all empirical dealings in the state of the highest reality- एवं परमार्थवस्थायां सर्वव्यवहाराभावं वदन्ति वेदान्तिनः।

## Pramāṇas

Pramāṇas are the means of knowledge and they are the important topic discussed in detail by the Indian philosophical systems. The question whether Śrī Śaṅkara accepts the Pramāṇas or not, does not arise because Pramāṇas are accepted only by those who are dealing with the objects of empirical knowledge. The epistemological outlook of Śrī Śaṅkara is to perceive the unity beyond multiplicity and non- duality beyond

duality. As he does not discuss the psychology of Pratyakṣa and Anumāna, we are unable to discuss his ideas on it. Admitting the multiplicity from the empirical point of view, he makes a mention on the Pramāṇās. But his aim was not to explain or define Pramāṇās like the other Dārśanikas but to highlight the role of śruti (śabda pramāṇa) for the attainment of Brahmajñāna and also for the establishment of Brahman as the ultimate cause of this universe.

Śrī Śaṅkara states that the Pramāṇās are powerful in their respective sphere. स्वविषयशूराणि हि प्रमाणानि श्रोत्रादिवत्।<sup>19</sup> He also says; 'Knowledge arises from its valid means such as pratyakṣa, anumāna etc. and the Pramāṇās apprehend the themes just as they are.' प्रमाणं च यथाभूतवस्तुविषयम्।<sup>20</sup> According to him the external things are known individually by the respective Pramāṇas. यथास्वं सर्वैरेव प्रमाणैर्बाह्योऽर्थः उपलभ्यमानः . . . . etc.।<sup>21</sup> Hence valid knowledge is something to be done, not done or done otherwise, for it is entirely determined by things and neither by injunctions nor by man. Though knowledge is a mental act, it has a great difference and it is dependent on man. For Śrī Śaṅkara, pramāṇa is the essence of his philosophical super structure. He ascertains that the possibility or impossibility of the existence of a thing is determined in accordance with the applicability or non-applicability of the Pramāṇas to it, but the applicability or non-applicability of the pramāṇa is not ascertained in accordance with the possibility or impossibility of the thing. अध्यवसायो यतः प्रमाणप्रवृत्त्यप्रवृत्तिपूर्वकौ संभवासंभवावाधार्यते न पुनः संभवासंभवपूर्विके प्रमाणप्रवृत्त्यप्रवृत्ती।<sup>22</sup>



Even though Śrī Śaṅkara is concerned about the scriptural testimony (śruti) as the most valid pramāṇa, he refers to at least five Pramāṇas which are generally of lower knowledge and which are nothing but Avidyā. तस्मादविद्यावद्विषयाण्येव प्रत्यक्षादीनि प्रमाणानि। Śrī Śaṅkara mentions the pramāṇa as न प्रत्यक्षं नानुमानमत एव च नागमः<sup>23</sup> and न प्रत्यक्षं नानुमानं नोपमानं नार्थापत्तिर्बोद्धोऽपि। Here, he regards pratyakṣa, anumāna, upamāna and arthāpatti as laukika Pramāṇās and śabda (śruti) as vaidika. He observes that all activities, scriptural and conventional, depend on knowledge and ignorance.

In his Bhāṣya also he uses the terms pratyakṣa and anumāna in the sense of śruti and smṛti respectively. He says that pratyakṣa is analogous to the Vedas since they do not depend on any other means of knowledge, for fixing their validity. By anumāna he means the smṛti, for it depends on other sources for its validity प्रत्यक्षं श्रुतिः प्रामाण्यं प्रत्यनपेक्षत्वात्। अनुमानं स्मृतिः प्रामाण्यं प्रति सापेक्षत्वात्।<sup>24</sup> The Vedas have an independent authority with regard to what they reveal, just as much as the sun has with regard to its colour, whereas the authority of any human being is remote, since it depends on some other source of knowledge and since the memory of the speaker intervenes. वेदस्य हि निरपेक्षं स्वार्थे प्रामाण्यं रवेरिव रूपविषये।<sup>25</sup> He holds that Vedic texts (śrutis) are the valid means in the matter of generating knowledge about the supersensuous things. श्रुतिश्च नः प्रमाणमतीन्द्रियार्थविज्ञानोत्पत्तेः।<sup>26</sup>

The importance of śruti is mentioned by Śrī Śaṅkara throughout his Bhāṣya. He says: The divine vision related to the

Ātman and other things occur to him who, free from desire and aspiring to know Brahman, is devoutly engaged in the obligatory work enjoined in the śruti and the smṛti. In his opinion śruti is the most important in metaphysical matters. With regard to matters like the nature of Brahman, śāstra supersedes all other Pramāṇas. शास्त्रं त्वन्त्यं प्रमाणम् ।<sup>27</sup> Even though Brahman stands as an established positive entity, it is not an object of Pratyakṣa, for the unity of the Ātman and Brahman, as stated in 'तत्त्वमसि', cannot be identified except by means of 'Śruti'. न च परिनिष्ठितवस्तुस्वरूपत्वेऽपि प्रत्यक्षादिविषयत्वं ब्रह्मणः 'तत्त्वमसि' इति ब्रह्मात्मभावस्य शास्त्रमन्तरेणानवगम्यमानत्वात् ।<sup>28</sup> Validity of the Upaniṣads is not to be established by anumāna in which case alone it would have been necessary to cite, analogous cases. न चानुमानगम्यं शास्त्रप्रामाण्यं येनान्यत्र दृष्टुं निदर्शनमपेक्षेत । Therefore it is proved that Brahman is known from the scriptures alone.

He ascertains that since a man without self-identification with the body, mind, senses, etc. cannot become a cognizer, and as such the Pramāṇas cannot function for him. This entity (Brahman) is not an object of perception; it is devoid of form. And it is not subject to anumāna, devoid of all grounds of anumāna and the like. But like the religious acts (producing virtue), this entity is known from the scripture alone. Śrī Śāṅkara has affirmed the absolute authority of the śruti as his most methodological tool. According to him the Upaniṣads are the only authority of Brahman and of not the sense. Hence, it has to be accepted just as it is presented by the Upaniṣads.

शब्दमूलं च ब्रह्म शब्दप्रमाणकं नेन्द्रियादिप्रमाणकं तद्यथा शब्दमभ्युपगन्तव्यम् ।<sup>29</sup> However, in the empirical level he never

negates other Pramāṇas. For him pratyakṣa, anumāna, etc. may be serviceable when they do not come into conflict with the śruti texts. सत्सु तू वेदान्तवाक्येषु जगतो जन्मादिकारणवादिषु तदर्थग्रहणदाढ्यायानुमानमपि वेदान्तवक्याविरोधि प्रमाणं भवन्न निवार्यते।<sup>30</sup>

Śrī Śaṅkara recognizes the need of reason for testing scriptural views (śrutis). It is through reasoning that the interpretations of the śrutis are refuted and their real purport is determined. श्रुत्यर्थविप्रतिपत्तौ चार्थाभासनिराकरणेन सम्यगर्थनिर्धारणं तर्केणैव वाक्यवृत्तिनिरूपणरूपेण क्रियते।<sup>31</sup> Reason is the key that unlocks the scriptural truth and paves the way for its intuitive perception. According to the Advaita Vedantins, revelation, reason and realization form the triple means to the full knowledge of Brahman.

Śrī Śaṅkara situates his thinking on the fact that the whole of the pramāṇavyavasthā must be utilized to the realization of such an ultimate reality. Even though he holds the above Pramāṇas in high esteem and has accepted śruti as the most authoritative, he negates all of them in the pāmāsthika level of reality. He stresses: "Just as the ideas of the body and the self are accepted by the wise as valid postulates for empirical dealings, these empirical means of knowledge (Pramāṇas) are accepted as valid till the direct knowledge of the self dawns - - देहात्मप्रत्ययो यद्वत्प्रमाणत्वेन कल्पितः। लौकिकं तद्वदेवेदं प्रमाणं त्वाऽऽत्मनिश्चयात्।<sup>32</sup>

In the Bhagavadgītābhāṣya he says : Before the dawn of the knowledge of the Self, the śruti pertaining to action which causes the identification of the body with the self may

constitute itself a true meaning of knowledge in that state even as the *pratyakṣapramāṇa* constitutes a valid proof. प्रकारान्तरस्थानां च साक्षादेव प्रामाण्यसिद्धिः प्राग् आत्मज्ञानात् देहाभिमाननिमित्तः प्रत्यक्षादिप्रामाण्यवत्। He admits that all these injunctions as well as all the other means of knowledge have their validity till the realization, 'I am the Brahman'

It shows that all objects including *śrutis* are valid in the *vyāvahārika* level of reality only and he negates all *Pramāṇas* in the *pāramārthika* level when one attains the state of Brahman. He negates the *Śabdapramāṇa* through the *śruti* itself. The *Upaniṣad* says— वेदाः अवेदाः।<sup>33</sup> (The Vedas are no Vedas) यत्र नान्यत्पश्यति नान्यच्छृणोति नान्यद्विजानाति स भूमा।<sup>34</sup> यत्र त्वस्य सर्वमात्मैवाभूत्तत्केन कं पश्येत्।<sup>35</sup> (When to the knower of Brahman everything has become the Self, what should one see and through what ?) एकमेवाद्वितीयम्। ('one only without a second'), नेह नानास्ति किञ्चन। (There is no diversity whatsoever in it), etc. All the above mentioned *śrutis* reveal the negation of the *Pramāṇas* in the state of enlightenment. He begins saying: In this state 'the father is no father', and ends with 'the Vedas are no Vedas'. We do admit the absence of the Vedas in the state of enlightenment. अत्र पिताऽपिता..... इत्युपक्रम्य “वेदा अवेदाः इति वचनादिष्यत एवास्माभिः श्रुतेरप्यभावः प्रबोधे”।<sup>36</sup> Similarly he declares that we do not admit the existence of things different from Brahman in the state when the highest reality is decidedly known. Hence all empirical dealings will be denied in the state of the highest reality. Thus the Advaitin's unity is a denial of duality. Through this observation Śrī Śaṅkara established his Advaitic vision.



## Mokṣa

In Śrī Śaṅkara's view mokṣa is the state of being one with everything. सर्वात्मभावो मोक्षः।<sup>37</sup> Absolute Brahman cannot be achieved apart from the realization of the non-dual self. The enlightened one becomes free from name and form created by ignorance and attains the resplendent puruṣa. Through knowledge, all obstacles are got rid of – अविद्याप्रतिबन्धमात्रो हि मोक्षः।<sup>38</sup> It also says that the cessation of bondage is mokṣa. बन्धनाश एव हि मोक्षः।<sup>39</sup> Hence dwelling in the nature of one's own self, on the cessation of the material cause, consisting in ignorance, desire and action, constitutes liberation तस्मादविद्याकामकर्मोपादनहेतुनिवृत्तौ स्वात्मव्यवस्थानं मोक्षः इति ।

Mokṣa is the state of identification with Brahman and hence it is not to be achieved through purification. The state of liberation is being nothing but Brahman itself. In this state already stated, the father is no father, the Vedas are no Vedas. Śrī Śaṅkara's Gītābhāṣya states: ज्ञानसधनानां भावनापरिपाकनिमित्तं तत्त्वज्ञानं तस्य अर्थः मोक्षः संसारोपमः।<sup>40</sup> Quoting Purāṇa in Bhagavadgītābhāṣya he establishes the statement ज्ञानादेव तु कैवल्यम् ज्ञानात् कैवल्यमाप्नोति इति च पुराणस्मृतेः।<sup>41</sup> According to him, apart from the knowledge of the non-dual self, there is no attainment of the absolute goal of life. The state of Brahman can be attained through the mind, purified by the knowledge of the Supreme Truth and through the instruction of the teacher. When the effect, already produced, wears away, liberation comes inevitably to the man of knowledge.

Śrī Śaṅkara clearly states that mokṣa can be attained in this life itself, not after the fall of this body. तस्मादिहैव ब्रह्मैव

सन् ब्रह्माप्येति न शरीरपातोत्तरकालं।<sup>42</sup> Through this it can be understood that he gives importance to jīvanmukti than vidhamukti. Apart from this, he mentions that kramamukti is attained after the purification of mind. He states: न ह्यञ्जसैव गतिपूर्विका परप्राप्तिः सम्भवतीत्युपपादितम्।<sup>43</sup> This kind of liberation by stages has to be admitted on the strength of the Upaniṣadic texts that speak of non-return - न स पुनरावर्तते।

## Observations

Śrī Śaṅkara's advaitic vision took shape to lead man to the fullest self-realization — Ātmasākṣātkāra. The transcendence and multiplicity in Śrī Śaṅkara's philosophy reveal the Universal and Infinite unity of the Absolute Reality. While establishing the falsity of the world in the context of Advaita, he argues for its relative reality. All the above mentioned observations show that even though Śrī Śaṅkara has given explanations on various aspects of the universe, they are valid in the Vyāvahārika level of reality only. Like the srutis, he adopts the methods of adhyāropa and apavāda for the purpose of bringing home the Ultimate Truth to all.

## Notes and references

1. Lalitātriśati — 44.
2. Ch. Up. Bh- III- 17.
3. B. S. Śbh- II-1-14.
4. Ch. — VIII-14-1.
5. Kath. Up. II-1-1 (Quoted by Śrī Śaṅkara), LingaPuraṇa I-70-95.

6. B.S. Sbh. — II- 1-24.
7. Ibid. I- 5-1.
8. Br̥h. Up. Sbh.- III-8.
9. Ch .Up. Sbh.-V- 1-15.
10. Ibid - VIII- 6.
11. Br̥h. UP. Sbh. - IV-4-5.
12. Pras. Up. Sbh. - 1-16.
13. B. G. Sbh. XIII-19.
14. Br̥h. Up. bh - III-3.
15. Tait. Up. Sbh. - I
16. B.G. Sbh. - XVI-1.
17. Ibid.
18. Br̥h. Up. Sbh. - III-4-2.
19. Ibid-2-1-1.
20. B S Sbh. I-1-4.
21. Ibid -II -2-5-28.
22. Ibid.
23. Br̥h. Up. Sbh. — II-2-1.
24. B. S. Sbh. II-3-8-28.
25. Ibid. II-1-2-3.
26. Tait. Up. Sbh. — II-6.
27. B. G. Sbh-II-18.
28. B. S. Sbh. - I-1-4.

29. Ibid II-1-27.
30. Ibid — 1-2.
31. Ibid-II-1-3-11.
32. Ibid - 1-1-4.
33. Brh. Up. Sbh. — IV-3-22.
34. Ch. Up. — VII-24.
35. Brh. Up — IV-5-15.
36. B. S. Sbh. — IV-1.
37. Brh. Up. Sbh. — VI-1.
38. Mund. Up. Sbh — II- 8.
39. Ibid.
40. B. G. Sbh. — XIII-11.
41. Ibid — XVIII-66
42. Brh. Up. Sbh.- IV-4-7.
43. B. S. Sbh. IV-3- 10.



## CHAPTER - 3

### Śrī Śaṅkara as a Vedabhāṣyakāra

Vedic texts are the most valid means in the matter of generating knowledge about the supersensuous things. Vedas being the earliest expressions of human knowledge can be considered as the foundation of world culture. We have a great legacy of Vedabhāṣyakāras. Some distinguished Veda bhāṣyakāras are Skandhaswāmi (630 A.D.) Nārāyaṇa (687A.D.) Venkaṭamādhava (1200 A.D.) Bhaṭṭagovinda (1367A.D.) Lakṣmaṇa (1150A.D.), Dhanuṣkayajwa (1300A.D.), Ānanda Tīrtha (-13th.C), Ātmananda (-13thC) Sāyaṇa (14th.CA.D), Rāvaṇa (1600A.D), Mudgala (1470 A.D ) Chaturvedaswāmi (16th century), Bharataswāmi (14th century), Varadaswāmi, Bhaṭṭabhāskara, Uvada (1100) Haradatta, Sudarśana Suri, Sadguru Śiṣya, Dayānanda Saraswatī and Mahīdhara.

Even though Śrī Śaṅkara the greatest luminary in the world of Indian metaphysics has written Bhāṣyas on the Upaniṣads, the inseparable parts of the Vedas, he is not included in the list of Vedabhāṣyakaras. But, at the same time, he is regarded as Brāhmaṇabhāṣyakāra as he wrote Bhāṣya on Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad which is a part of Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa. This is because of the dubious existence of the term 'Veda'.

What is Veda ? Is it the Samhitās alone or does it constitute the Brāhmaṇas, Āraṇyakās and Upaniṣads ? This is a matter of immense discussion among the scholars; and they hold varied views. Gopatha Brāhmaṇa.<sup>1</sup> states that the Brāhmaṇas are composed by human beings and they are not Vedas (II-9). Taking this statement as authority some scholars argue that Brāhmaṇas are not Vedas because only the four Vedas are divine revelations. But the Mantras state that the Vedas, Brāhmaṇas, Upaniṣads and the like are revelations and statements from Kātyāyanapratijñāsūtra (1) and Āpasthambaśrautasūtra, i.e. मन्त्रब्राह्मणयोर्वेदनामधेयमिति । maintains that both the Mantras and the Brāhmaṇas constitute the Vedas; and this view point is also accepted by the Bhāṣyakāras like Sāyaṇa (Ṛgveda Bhāṣya Bhūmikā). Even before Sāyaṇa, Śrī Śaṅkara too had agreed with this statement. The term 'mantra' is etymologically connected with the root 'man' meaning 'to consider, know or think'. 'Tra' is to be reasonably taken as an ending with the force of creating significantly an abstract that which is thought or to be thought.

Śrī Śaṅkara maintains that in the Vedas, the meaning of the mantras being hidden, is generally very difficult to comprehend. Thus the Brāhmaṇa texts proceed to explain them and he had agreed with the statement एवं मन्त्रब्राह्मणयोरेवग्रहणम् ।<sup>2</sup> Here by the term Mantra, he means Veda and the term Brāhmaṇa is used to denote the Upaniṣads, the Vedāṅgas and the like. The Brāhmaṇas always presuppose the Mantras, for without the latter it would convey no meaning.

There is no conflict between the Samhitās and the Brāhmaṇas on the one hand and the Upaniṣads on the other. As the philosophical contents of the Upaniṣads are found in several hymns of the Ṛgveda such as Āsyavāmiya, Nāsadiya, Hiranyagarbha, Viśwakarma, etc. The Vedas are a heap of words (शब्दराशिः) made up of the Mantras and the Brāhmaṇas. वेदशब्देन तु सर्वत्र शब्दराशिर्विवक्षितः।<sup>3</sup>

In the Brahmasūtrabhāṣya, Śrī Śaṅkara states : "It is proper that the Mantra and the Brāhmaṇa portions should bear the same meaning, for they are never contradictory" मन्त्रब्राह्मणयोश्चैकार्थत्वं युक्तं, अविरोधात्।<sup>4</sup> His statement in Bhagavadgītābhāṣya i.e., द्विविधो हि वेदोक्तो धर्मः प्रवृत्तिलक्षणो निवृत्तिलक्षणश्चेति। mentions that the pravṛttilakṣaṇa, the first part is of the Samhitās and the Brāhmaṇas, and the Nivṛtti lakṣaṇa, the latter part of the Vedas constitute the entire gamut of teaching of the Upaniṣads.

According to Sāyaṇa, the Veda is that which makes known the transcendental means of obtaining the desirable and avoiding the undesirable. Before him Śrī Śaṅkara had found this view acceptable. Śrī Śaṅkara states: The Vedas as a whole has revealed the means of attaining what is desirable and avoiding what is undesirable – सर्वोऽप्ययं वेदः प्रत्यक्षानुमानाभ्यामनवगतेष्टानिष्टप्राप्तिपरिहारो-पायप्रकाशनपरः।<sup>5</sup> Here he adds that some ignore the instructions of the Upaniṣads, thinking that the portion of the Vedas that deals with injunctions and prohibitions alone constitutes the Vedas and nothing else.

Śrī Śaṅkara asserts that the Veda symbolizes dharma and Brahma. यो धर्म ब्रह्म च वेदयति स वेद इति वेदलक्षणम्।<sup>6</sup> The scripture is intended to show in particular the existence of the self in the next life (or lives) as well as the means of attaining the desirable and avoiding the undesirable in that life. Here Veda means the 'Upaniṣad'. The goal of all the Vedas and the Upaniṣads is the attainment of Brahman.

### Upaniṣad as a part of the Veda

Work and knowledge are two subjects of the Veda. Vedic injunctions are known as śruti. Śruti pervades from the original Veda Samhitās to the Upaniṣads. Even though the Upaniṣads treat exclusively the Jñānakāṇḍa, or the knowledge portion of the Vedas, we find a mixture of Jñāna, Bhakti and Karma in some portions of the Upaniṣads. Although there are two hundred Upaniṣads, only fifteen are mentioned by the philosophic commentator Śrī Śaṅkara. Those fifteen are considered Vedic and the principal Upaniṣads. The Vedas teach the divine knowledge and treat Karma as a means to accomplish that knowledge. The word 'karma' here signifies both sacrificial rites and unselfish performances of secular duty. Through work our hearts get purified and we become ripe for divine knowledge. According to Śrī Śaṅkara all portions of Karma, Jñāna, Upāsana and Vedāṅgas are called Vedas.

आसमन्तात् नानाप्रकारैः कर्मोपासनाज्ञानकाण्डतदङ्गत्वादिभिः  
गमयन्ति स्वार्थं प्रकाशयन्तीत्यागमाः वेदाः।<sup>7</sup>



While explaining the Upaniṣadic mantra तमेतं वेदानुवचनेन ब्राह्मणा विविदिपन्ति यजेन दानेन तपसा .....। Śrī Śaṅkara states: "Daily reading is enjoined by the word 'वेदानुवचन'. Hence, the reading of the Upaniṣads is inevitable and thus every part of the meaning of the word is covered. It is by introducing the rites such as the Yajña that the word वेदानुवचन is used.

यदा वेदानुवचनशब्देन नित्यः स्वाध्यायो विधीयते तदा उपनिषदपि गृहीतैवेति।<sup>8</sup>

He continues: Since the word 'vedānuvacanam' should be meant as the whole of the Vedas, it is not reasonable that a part of it should be omitted. वेदानुवचनशब्दार्थकदेशो न परित्यक्तो भवति। The Vedic portion constituting the Upaniṣads would be valid as they explain the principle of non-dualism (real).

Śrī Śaṅkara states that the Upaniṣads are not composed by any human being. They are part and parcel of the Vedas and therefore they come into the category of revealed literature. The Upaniṣads are eternal and manifested like a man's breath. अस्य महतो भूतस्य निश्चसितमेतद्गवेदो यजुर्वेदः सामवेदाऽथर्वाङ्गिरस इतिहासः पुराणं विद्या उपनिषदः श्लोकाः सूत्राण्यनुव्याख्यानानि व्याख्यानान्यस्यैवैतानि निश्चसितानि।<sup>9</sup> This means that the R̥gveda, the Yajurveda, the Sāmaveda ... the Upaniṣadic verses, aphorisms, elucidations and explanations are the branches of the great being. They are all the breath. Thus the doubts concerning the statement in Gopatha Brāhmaṇa are clarified. When the mantras themselves consider the Vedas, Brāhmaṇas, Upaniṣads, etc. as revelations, the

statements in Gopatha Brāhmaṇa, which is a recent work, need not be considered as valid. Their meanings constitute the authenticity without depending upon other means. Therefore, that alone which is laid down in the Veda as knowledge or action, is to be grasped in the same spirit by those who hanker after their own well being. नियतरचनावतो विद्यमानस्यैव वेदस्याभिव्यक्तिः पुरुषनिश्चासवत्, न च पुरुषबुद्धिप्रयत्नपूर्वकः अतः प्रमाणं निरपेक्ष एव स्वार्थे तस्माद्यत्तेनोक्तं तत्तथैव प्रतिपत्तव्यं आत्मनः श्रेय इच्छद्भिः, ज्ञानं वा कर्म वेति।<sup>10</sup> The primary goal of Śrī Śaṅkara is to establish the Vedic dharma and propagate it.

The Vedic portion, constituting the Upaniṣads, would be valid since it explains the principle of non-dualism that is real वेदैकभूतोपनिषत्प्रमाणम्।<sup>11</sup> Even though the Upaniṣads are said to belong to the Uttarabhāga of the Vedas, it should not be construed that all the Upaniṣads are composed as their last portion. Some of them are interspersed among the rituals (Brāhmaṇas) and at least one (Īśāvāsyopaniṣad) in the saṃhita or mantra portion which is part of the Yajurveda.

## The Upaniṣads and the Karmakāṇḍa

A historical study of the doctrine of Karma reveals that in the Upaniṣadic literature it has been discussed more deeply as compared to the Vedic and the Brāhmaṇic literature. The Upaniṣads like the Bṛhadāraṇyaka, the Chāndogya and the Kauṣītakī, for the first time, provide explicit accounts of the doctrine of Karma and renunciation. In the Bṛhadāraṇyakabhāṣya Śrī Śaṅkara states: Its relation of the Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad to the ceremonial part of the

Karmakāṇḍa is now being revealed. तम्याग्य कर्मकाण्डेन सम्बन्धोऽभिधीयते। सर्वोऽप्ययं वेदः।<sup>12</sup> He maintains that action like the knowledge (of Brahman) should be adhered to since both karma and jñāna are equally enjoined by the śruti. The Upaniṣadic tradition is simply the theoretical part of the practical tradition which leads from Vedic ritual to post-Vedic ritual thought. Ritualistic documents are very closely connected with the Upaniṣads. Just like the Brāhmaṇas they seek to explain the hidden meanings and the connections of ritual actions and words. Śrī Śaṅkara clearly states: Therefore the Vedānta texts, which declare the unity of Brahman do not contradict the scriptures laying down the ritualistic injunction तस्मान्न ब्रह्मैकत्वं ज्ञापयिष्यन्तो वेदान्तः विधिशास्त्रस्य बाधकः।<sup>13</sup>

The Vedic priests are mentioned in the Upaniṣads. The major sacrifices such as horse sacrifices and soma sacrifices are beautifully discussed in them. At the commencement of the Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad a description of the Aśwamedha or horse sacrifice, which does not properly belong to it, is given. The mode of performing the Aśwamedha and Puruṣamedha are emblematic ceremonies, not real sacrifices. The horse, the subject of the religious ceremony Aśwamedha, is also an emblem of Virāj or the primeval and universally manifested being. The aim of Aśwamedha sacrifice is the exposition of the knowledge of Brahman. It is meant to show that all rites come within the purview of transmigratory existence.

The Agnicayana is the most important and complex Vedic sacrifice. About one third of the Satapatha Brāhmaṇa deals with the Agnicayana while only the two sections of the book

are considered part of the Brhadāraṇyakopaniṣad. It tries to integrate the aspects of Aśwamedha into Agnicayana. Śrī Śaṅkara explains the significance of Aśwamedha. He says: Of all sacrifices, the horse sacrifice is the foremost since it has for its result the attainment of Hiraṇyagarbha in his collective and individual aspect.<sup>14</sup> According to him matters related to knowledge are similar to those related to karma. The rites connected with the new moon and the full moon are productive of such and such results and their parts have to be performed in their respective orders. There are supersensuous matters beyond the scope of direct cognition and they are known to be true only through the Vedic utterances. Similarly, it is only through the Vedic utterances we come to know that entity like the supreme Self Īśvara. Chanting of the mantras is to be done through sacrifice.

Sacrifices like Rajasūya, Agnihotra and the like are also explained in the Vedas. It is said that some people are unable to perform it, either due to lack of wealth or due to their birth in a community that has no right to perform it. They can attain the result of the said sacrifice through sampad, i.e., practice of the recitation of Vedas सम्पन्नम केनचित्सामान्येनाग्निहोत्रादीनां कर्मणां फलवतां तत्फलाय संपादनं सम्पत्फलस्येव वा।<sup>15</sup> Agnihotra, the smallest form of Vedic Yajña, is the traditional ritual to be performed daily by a house-holder in the morning after sunrise and in the evening before sunset. Agnihotra keeps the environment warm, clean, healthy and congenial. The purification of the atmosphere purifies prāṇa, the life energy and the purified prāṇa purifies the mind. The whole universe



is the result of the oblations offered in the Agnihotra and other rites.

In Īśāvāsyopaniṣadbhāṣya Śrī Śaṅkara explains the Vedic dharma. He says: Never indeed shall anything, enjoined by the scripture, become unfit for performance. The two-fold aspects of the Vedic dharma consisting in action and renunciation have been revealed in the Īśāvāsyopaniṣad. In the matter of revealing the Vedic dharma, consisting in action as a whole which has injunctions and prohibitions for its characteristics, the Brāhmaṇas ending with pravargya rite has been made use of thereafter in order to reveal the Vedic dharma consisting in renunciation that the Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad has been made use of.

Praśnopaniṣad belongs to the pippāladaśākha of the Adharvaveda. It belongs to the Brāhmaṇa portion. Śrī Śaṅkara, in the introduction to his Bhāṣya, expresses: The Brāhmaṇas began with a view to explain in detail what has been discussed in the mantra portion. The Muṇḍakopaniṣad belongs to the mantra portion. The significance of karma is mentioned in it. Here he says: Karma means Agnihotra, the first in all karmas.

Taittirīyopaniṣad belongs to 7th, 8th and 9th Prapāṭhakas of the Taittirīya Āraṇyaka which appertains to the Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda. Sāyaṇa in his commentary on Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa, says:- सेयं तैत्तिरीयोपनिषद्विधा संहितीः वारुणीः याज्ञिकीः चेति । Kathopaniṣad also discusses the ritualistic portion like agnicayana.

All the above mentioned factors reveal that the Upaniṣads which declare the unity of Brahman do not either oppose the instructions related to the means of attaining the desired object, or ward off people from endeavouring for it. The monistic vision of the Upaniṣad is also present in the Ṛgveda. The hymn of creation mentions the same oneness of puruṣa which is used as the Ātman or Brahman in the Upaniṣads.

### Symbolic Representation in the Upaniṣads

The symbolic representation found in the Vedas can be seen in the Upaniṣads also. Three types of symbolisms are extant in the Upaniṣads such as nature symbolism, sacrifices and sacrificial items and the mystic sound syllable such as Aum' symbols.

The Upaniṣad compares this world with an Aswatha tree (as a symbol) which has its root above the earth. The tree is called so because it constantly changes as it does not remain the same till the next day. न श्वोऽपि स्याता इति अश्वत्थः। The word 'above' conveys the sense of ontological superiority or priority. ŚŖĪ Śaṅkara places Brahman, the root of the entire universe, above all other things, because it is the cause of everything, the eternal and the great. Here the symbol of the tree, like that of the earth and other phenomena of nature, is extremely significant. A tree cannot exist without roots. So the symbol of the tree indicates that nation or people should be rooted in the spiritual tradition which has shaped and sustained them. By the symbol mṛtyu, the Paramātman having non-sentient matter as his body is signified.

### Upāsanā in the Upaniṣads

The Indian thought of Bhakti starts from the Vedas onwards. According to tradition, the Vedas are divine knowledge and they refer to God as one without a beginning and an end. He is eternal and all-pervasive. The Bhaktivāda of the Vedas is interlinked with knowledge (Jñānam) action (Karma) and devotion (Upāśana). Vaidika Bhakti has three parts, viz., Stuti, Prārthana, and Upāśana. Stuti means praise of God's attributes and Prārthana is the request to God for purifying all papas and attaining puṇya. Ṛgveda states that one can gain mukti in two different ways, i.e., through knowledge one becomes free from karma and through devotion one becomes capable of achieving pure knowledge and getting mukti. Some Brāhmaṇas like Aitareya are related to Jñānakāṇḍa. Bhakti is hardly mentioned in them. While describing Yajñas, the devout belief in the efficacy of invocation and sacrificial offerings are significant. In the seventh chapter of Aitareya Brāhmaṇas, mention of devotion can be seen. Satapatha Brāhmaṇa denotes Karmakāṇḍa and it advises to do karma. Both Jñāna and Bhakti are discussed in it. आत्मा वाऽरे दर्शनेन श्रवणेन मत्या विज्ञानेनेदं सर्वं विदितम्।<sup>16</sup> In Havirijñakāṇḍa, elucidation of Haviryajña (offering of milk, butter, grain food and similar materials) shows the essentiality of Upāśana or Bhakti. Sāmaveda is the Veda in which Upāśana is clearly discussed. Chāndogyopaniṣad says that meditation on sama as the whole is good समस्तस्य खलु साम्नः उपासनं साधु।<sup>17</sup> In this context Śaṅkarācārya says : Meditation on the object of devotion is connected with the parts of Sāma भक्तिं विषयोपासनं समन्वयसंबद्धम्।

We know that the *Āraṇyakas* are of mysterious character – the ritual allegorical texts. The deep mysterious meanings of ceremonies are unfolded in the *Āraṇyakas*. Finally the *Upaniṣads* would close the period of the Vedic instruction. Older *Upaniṣads* were conscious of the hostile character of the entire ritualistic system of the *Brāhmaṇas* that they could concede to it only due to a relative recognition. The *Upāsana* in the *Brāhmaṇas* and *Āraṇyakas* is related to various *yajñas*. The *Bhagavadgītā* also states: यजन्तः मामुपासते। But the protest towards the *yajña* also can be seen in the *Upaniṣads*. Śrī Śaṅkara says: "He who worships another divinity (than the *Ātman*) and says 'it is one and I am another', is not wise, but he is like a house-dog of the Gods." आत्मा ह्येषा स भवत्यथ योऽन्यां देवतामुपास्तेऽन्योऽसावन्योऽहमस्मीति न स वेद।<sup>18</sup> The remark of *Yajñavalkya* about the sacrifice sounds very contemptuous. He mentions that it is brute beasts, nor is it less.

The term *Upāsana* is first seen in the *Aitareya Āraṇyaka*. It says: उपासते आहुदयं ब्रह्मेत्यारुणयोः। But the term is profoundly used in the *Upaniṣads*. It is a technique, a means to engage the total being of man towards the realization of the truth on which he fixes his mind. *Upāsana* approaches the object of worship by way of meditating on it in accordance with the teachings of the *Śāstras* and the *Guru* and dwelling steadily in the current of that one thought. *Muṇḍakopaniṣad* stresses the necessity and significance of *Upāsana* to realize the ultimate one. In it, the *Praṇava* is the bow; the *Ātman* is the arrow that is sharpened by *Upāsana*. By making use of the bow ॐ the self can be directed towards *Brahman*. One



must pursue the target undistracted. He will then be lodged in that like the arrow in the target. Here also he Jivātman is the upāsaka. The Brahman is upāsya and Praṇavam is the means of Upāsana. The aim of Upāsana is the awakening of the God-consciousness within one's own self. It helps the purification of oneself.

In the Upaniṣads, Brahmopāsana is discussed. Brahman is the whole universe with an inner tranquility. One should venerate it: सर्वं खल्विदं ब्रह्म तज्जलानिति शान्तं उपामीत। Here, Brahman is the object of the verb उपामीत, Śānta is the Upāsaka, i.e., the Jīvātman. When the worship of Brahman under such formulas is enjoined, it is not implied that the Upaniṣads signify worship but it points out that meditation on the Brahman under these mysterious terms must take the place of the worship of the Gods. The Upaniṣad says: आत्मेत्येवोपासीत।<sup>20</sup> Here, the Ātman is the destination of Para-Brahmopāsana. उपासीत is मध्यमपुरुषः। Here, the Jivātman is the subject. The Paramātman is the object of Upāsana. Here lies the difference of the Upāsana and the Upāsaka. Similar ideas can be seen in the Muṇḍakopaniṣad: "Two birds, companions and friends, nestle on the very same tree, one of them eats a tasty fig and the other, not eating, looks on." द्वामुपर्णासयुजा सखाया समानवृक्षे परिपस्वजाते। तयोरन्यः पिप्पलं स्वाद्वत्तिं अनशननन्यो अभिचाकशीति॥<sup>21</sup> Here, the Jīva is the Bhoktā (cater) and the Paramātman is the Draṣṭa (witness). The world is compared to an Asvattha tree. In the Chandogya, the Upāsana of ॐ is discussed— ॐ इत्येतदक्षरमुद्गीथमुपासीत। It

means, one should venerate the great chant as this syllable for one begins the great chant with ॐ.

The nature of the Upāsaka is illustrated in the seventh chapter of the Chāndogyopaniṣad. — The Ātman who sees it this way thinks about it this way and perceives it this way, like a man who finds pleasure in his self, who dallies with the self, who mates with the self, and who attains bliss.

Even though the Bhaktikāṇḍa is feeble in the Upaniṣads, there are seedlings of Bhakti. The Upaniṣadic Ṛṣis did not ignore Bhakti. So it must be assumed that the Yajñakāṇḍa of Brāhmaṇas paved the way for idol worship in the later period. The term bhakti is directly mentioned in the end of the Śvetāśwataropaniṣad. It says: Only in a man who has the deepest love for God and who shows the same love towards his teacher, as towards God, do these points declared by the noble one shine forth- यस्य देवे परा भक्तिर्यथा देवे तथा गुरौ तस्यैते कथिता ह्यर्थाः प्रकाशन्ते महात्मनः।<sup>22</sup>

A seeker of liberation must engage in action as duty without expectation of the result. For this, he must have devotion which will enable him to discharge his duties by surrendering the result of his actions to God. Action and devotion will purify the mind and prepare it for pursuing the path of knowledge. Until he develops an intense desire for liberation, he should approach a guru who has attained self-realization and then learn the scriptural teachings from him. The Chāndogyopaniṣad says: आचार्यवान् पुरुषो वेद तस्य तावदेव चिरं यावन्न विमोक्ष्यऽथ संपत्स्ये।<sup>23</sup>

The term Upāsana literally means sitting near, mentally approaching an ideal and is termed as bhakti.<sup>19</sup> There is no significant difference between the essential nature of the Vedic Upāsana and bhakti as known today. Upāsana is directed to things other than the Brahman and the deities, whereas bhakti is towards God or deity. Bhakti is usually a discipline of the dualist. It is seen that even though Upāsana is an aid to the non-dualist, its practice involves a sense of dualism.

In the Sambandhabhāṣya of the Chāndogyopaniṣad Śrī Śaṅkara defines Upāsana thus: "Meditation (Upāsana) means establishment of a continuous flow of similar modifications of the mind in relation to some object as presented by the scriptures. उपासनं नाम यथाशास्त्रसमर्थितं किञ्चिदालम्बनमुपादाय तस्मिन् समानचित्तवृत्तिसन्तानकरणम् । He divides the emblematical Upāsana into two—Sampat Upāsana and Adhyāsa Upāsana. When we take up the symbol of a lower order and by virtue of similarity superimpose on it the qualities of a higher thing, we have Sampat Upāsana based on similarity. Through this we reflect not on the lower order of things but on the higher ones, which the lower things symbolize. In Adhyāsa Upāsana the symbol itself predominates and on it are superimposed the qualities of the deity. For instance मनो ब्रह्मेत्युपासीत, अन्नं ब्रह्मेत्युपासीत, आदित्यो ब्रह्मेत्युपासीत । and the like. It is a matter of great discussion why the Upāsanas are included in the Upaniṣadic portion of the Vedas. It was done with the high purpose of urging people to cultivate dispassion towards the results of rites and duties.

Even after embarking on the path of knowledge, devotion is necessary during the three progressive stages through which a seeker evolves. The need for the pursuit of a spiritual discipline (bhakti) arises because of the difficulties involved in attaining the Brahman. Hence in the Upaniṣads, we can very well see the references to the role of bhakti in the form of Upāsana in directing people towards their ultimate aim of life. Therefore it can be concluded that the concept of Upāsana in the Brāhmaṇas and the Upaniṣads must have been termed as bhakti at a later stage.

### Similarities and Dissimilarities of the Śāṅkarabhāṣya with the Bhāṣyas of Sāyaṇa and Mahīdhara

Let us compare the Bhāṣyas of Sāyaṇa and Mahīdhara with the Śāṅkarabhāṣya. When we go through the Bhāṣyas of Sāyaṇa, Mahīdhara and so on, who give importance to Karmakāṇḍa, it is seen that they also have commented the Upaniṣadic parts as spiritualistic. For instance, the Ṛgveda mantra द्वासुपर्णासयुजा सखाया . . . . . अनश्नन्त्यो अभिचाकशीतिक्ष is explained by Sāyaṇa as follows: The vital and supreme spirit Jīvātmā and Paramātmā, are, here, alluded to under the figure of the two birds. The vital spirit enjoys the reward of acts. Śrī Śāṅkara too has given a similar explanation to this.

All the major Upaniṣads are fundamentally based on Tīśopaniṣad. It occupies the first place, owing partly perhaps to the great spiritual significance of its content and partly because it is an integral part of the saṃhita, being the 40th chapter of the Yajurveda. On comparing Śrī Śāṅkara's Bhāṣya



on Īsopaniṣad with the Bhāṣyas of Sāyaṇa and Mahīdhara we find a similarity between them. The Yajurveda mantra अविद्यया मृत्युं तीर्त्वा विद्यया अमृतमश्नुते।<sup>24</sup> is explained by Mahidhara in the following manner :

विद्यां देवताज्ञानं अविद्यां कर्म च तदुभयं विद्याऽविद्यारूपं -  
 . . . . . कर्मकाण्डं ज्ञानकाण्डस्य गुणभूतमित्यतो सोऽविद्ययाऽग्निहोत्रादिकर्मणा  
 मृत्युं स्वाभाविकमज्ञानं मृत्युशब्दवाच्यं तीर्त्वा उत्तीर्यान्तःशुद्ध्या कृतकृत्या  
 भूत्वा विद्यया देवताज्ञानेनामृतं देवतात्मभावमश्नुते प्राप्नोति।  
 The same idea is given by Śrī Śaṅkara and he ascertains that the Agnihotra is more helpful to attain Jñāna as it purifies the mind. The R̥gveda mantra अरण्योर्निहितो जातवेदा. . . . .<sup>25</sup>  
 which is also included in the Kathopaniṣad is explained by Sāyaṇa and Śrī Śaṅkara with slight difference. Sāyaṇa states: Jāḍavedas has been deposited in the two sticks as the embryo is deposited in pregnant women. Agni is to be adored day by day by vigilant men laden with oblations. Śrī Śaṅkara's explanation is: The sacrificial fire lodged in the upper and the lower araṇi as the adhiyajña the enjoyer of all oblations, which the yogis and priests do, as the foetus is carefully borne by pregnant woman by means of food and drink. The sacrificial fire lodged in the upper and lower araṇi as the "adhiyajña", as the enjoyer of all offerings, which the yogis regard as "adhyātma" and which is well protected by the yogis and priests, as the foetus is carefully borne by pregnant woman by means of food and drink that are not censured, is well protected by priests and meditators.

Differences also can be seen among their Bhāṣyas. The mantra संभूतिं च विनाशं च<sup>26</sup> explained by Mahīdhara is

different from that of Śrī Śaṅkara. Mahīdhara explains: In order to enjoin the combined worship of asambhūti and sambhūti, their separate worship is condemned. Asambhūti means the denial of new birth or existence after death, and sambhūti is the exclusive assertion of that belief, devotion to which will produce excess energy in the practice of karma संभवनं संभूतिं; कार्यस्योत्पत्तिः तस्या अन्या असम्भूति प्रकृतिकारणमव्यक्ताख्यम्। In accordance with Śaṅkara's view asambhūti is undeveloped prakṛti— Nature in the causal or germinal state. Sambhūti is the manifestation of Brahman as Brahma the phenomenal creator called Hiraṇyagarbha, the golden germ. Yet both Mahīdhara and Śaṅkara hold that the term sambhūti in the mantra stands for asambhūti. Mahīdhara says that it is aphacresis, meaning undeveloped Nature. Śrī Śaṅkara also maintains that the word sambhūti is used in the sense of Asambhūti. Here the 'a' is omitted-

अवर्णलोपेन निर्देशो द्रष्टव्यप्रकृतिलयफलश्रुत्यनुरोधात् ।

The attainment of the knowledge of the Paramātmān or the Ātman has been emphasized throughout the Vedic literature. Sāyaṇa in his Ṛgvedabhāṣya explains the origin of the jīva. All these show that all Bhāṣyakārās explain the philosophical part of the Vedas as spiritual, and, at the same time, Śrī Śaṅkara also explains the karmakāṇḍa portion of the Vedas and the Brāhmaṇas as a supplement to the Jñānakāṇḍa.

The principal ten Upaniṣads (Daśopaniṣads) belong to four Vedas. Īśāvāsyopaniṣad belongs to Śukla Yajurveda (the 40th chapter) and is called Samhitopaniṣad. Kenopaniṣad

forms the ninth chapter of the Talavakāra Brāhmaṇa which belongs to the Samaveda. It is also called Brāhmaṇa Upaniṣad. Kathopaniṣad belongs to the Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda. Praśnopaniṣad is ascribed to the pippalādasākha of the Atharvaveda. The Muṇḍaka and Māṇḍukyopaniṣad also are ascribed to the Adharvaveda. While the praśna and Māṇḍukyopaniṣad belong to the Brāhmaṇa portion of the above veda, the Muṇḍakopaniṣad belongs to the Mantra portion. Chapters IV, V, and VI of the second Āraṇyaka of the Aitareya Āraṇyaka which is also known as the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa and which belongs to the Ṛgveda, constitute the Aitareya Upaniṣad. The Taittiriyaopaniṣad is constituted by the seventh, eighth and ninth prapāṭhakas of the Taittirīya Āraṇyaka which belongs to the Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda. Sāyaṇacārya, in his Bhāṣya on Taittiriya Āraṇyaka preferred the title Samhitopaniṣad to the Sikṣāvallī. The eight adhyāyas, beginning from the third of the Chāndogya Brāhmaṇa constitute the Chāndogyopaniṣad. The said Brāhmaṇa belongs to the Talavakāra branch of the Sāmaveda. The Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad belongs to the Śukla Yajurveda, especially the portions constituting its Mādhyamdina and Kaṇva branches.

In addition to this, the śāntimantras of the Daśopaniṣads indicate their close relation with the Vedas. For instance the Aitareya Upaniṣad begins with the śāntimantra of Ṛgveda.

ॐ वाङ्मे मनसि प्रतिष्ठिता मनो मे वाचि प्रतिष्ठितमाविरावीर्म  
एधि। वेदस्य म आणीस्थः श्रुतं मे मा प्रहासीः ।  
अनेनाधीतेनाहोरात्रान्सन्दधाम्यृतं वदिष्यामि । सत्यं वदिष्यामि । तन्मामावतु

नद्वक्त्तारमवतु । अवतु मामवतु वक्त्तारमवतु वक्त्तारम् । ॐ शान्तिः !  
शान्तिः ! शान्तिः !

Kaṭha and Taittirīyopaniṣads open with the śāntimantra of Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda.<sup>27</sup>

ॐ सह नावतु । सह नौ भुनक्तु । सह वीर्यं करवावहे ।  
तेजस्विनावधीतमस्तु । मा विद्विषावहे । ॐ शान्तिः ! शान्तिः !  
शान्तिः !

Īśāvāsyā and Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣads commence with the mantra of Śuklayajurveda

ॐ पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं पूर्णात्पूर्णमुदच्यते ।  
पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते ।  
ॐ शान्तिः ! शान्तिः ! शान्तिः !

Kena and Chāndogya Upaniṣads start with the Sāmaveda mantra.<sup>28</sup>

ॐ आप्यायन्तु ममान्ङ्गानि वाक्प्राणश्चक्षुः श्रोत्रमथो बलमिन्द्रियाणि  
च सर्वाणि । सर्वं ब्रह्मोपनिषदं माहं ब्रह्म निराकुर्या मा मा ब्रह्म  
निराकरोदनिराकरणमस्त्वनिराकरणं मेऽस्तु । तदात्मनि निरते य  
उपनिषत्सु धर्मास्ते मयि सन्तु ते मयि सन्तु ॥

ॐ शान्तिः ! शान्तिः ! शान्तिः !

Similarly the other three— Praśna, Muṇḍaka and Māṇḍūkyaopaniṣads— begin with the śāntimantra of Atharvaveda.



ॐ 'कर्णेभिः शृणुयाम देवा भद्रं पश्येमाश्रभिर्यजत्राः ।

स्थिरैरङ्गैस्तुष्टुवांसस्तनूभिर्व्यणेम देवहितं यदायुः ।

ॐ शान्तिः ! शान्तिः ! शान्तिः !

Since the parts of the Vedas like Karma, Jñāna and Upāsana are contained in the Upaniṣads, they may be regarded as the Vedas. For these reasons Śrī Śaṅkara considers the Upaniṣads as Vedas.

### Observations:

Karmakāṇḍa and Jñānakāṇḍa together form the Vedas. The Upaniṣads, being allied to the Jñānakāṇḍa portion cannot be separated from the Vedas.

Śrī Śaṅkara through his arguments in his Bhāṣya with the support of the mantras establishes the Upaniṣads as Vedas. Hence the statement that all the works excluding the Vedas are composed by human beings in the Gopatha Brāhmaṇa, is invalid. Vedabhāṣyakāras like Sāyaṇa, Mahīdhara and so on, have interpreted both the Jñāna and Karma portions of the Vedas including the Upaniṣads. Since Śāṅkarabhāṣya also has the methodological, etymological and aesthetic qualities like the other Vedabhāṣyas, Śrī Śaṅkara can be considered as a Vedabhāṣyakara. Vedānta has attached itself to the older school of Vedic interpretation, claiming that it had always been part of it. The ritual mīmāṃsa had never been completed without it. Śrī Śaṅkara's commentary on the Upaniṣads, the Brahmasūtra and the Bhagavadgītā underlines the same. It is not right to take Yāska, Sāyaṇa or any other modern scholar

as omniscient and infallible interpreters. According to tradition the pronouncers of various scientific truths or mysteries in the form of the mantras or chandas or literary couplets were known as Ṛṣis. (ऋषयो वे मन्त्र द्रष्टारः।) It is more suited to Śrī Śaṅkara because he is the speaker of scientific truth and also of Mantra. Studies reveal that the contents and the methodology of Śrī Śaṅkara's Bhāṣyas owe him a significant position in the row of Vedabhāṣyakāras. His support on Vedic Yajña deserves special attention. It denotes his knowledge on both spiritual and material objects. In a nutshell, Śrī Śaṅkara, being the commentator on Upaniṣads, the indivisible parts of Vedas, can be regarded as a distinguished Vedabhāṣyakāra.

### Notes and References

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2. Bṛh. Up. sbh. - II-4-10
3. Muṇḍ. Up. bh - 1- -6
4. B.S. Sbh. — I-1- 15.
5. Bṛh. Up. Sbh. - Introduction.
6. Ibid — I-4-14.
7. Lalitātriśatībhāṣya — 46.
8. Bṛh. Up Sbh. - IV- 4-22.
9. Ibid — II-4-10.
10. Ibid — II-2-10.
11. Ibid - IV-5-11.
12. Bṛh. Up. sbh. - Introduction

13. Ibid — II-1- 6.
14. Ibid- 1-1.
15. Ibid.
16. Śat.Bra-XIV-5-8-5.
17. Br̥h. Up. Sbh. — I-4-10.
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20. Br̥h. Up. Sbh- I -4-6.
21. Muṇḍ. Up. Sbh. III-1-1.
22. Śwet. Up.-VI-23.
23. Ch. Up. Sbh. VI-14-2.
24. Isa. Up. -11.
25. Kath. Up- II-1-8.
26. Īśa. Up. 14.
27. Taittirīya Āraṇyaka (-8-1-1,9-1-1
28. Pāraskaragr̥hyasūtra 3-16

## CHAPTER - 4

# The Specific Features of Śrī Śaṅkara's Bhāṣyagranthas

The common rituals, basic beliefs and philosophies which existed in the ancient past were reflected through the writings of the respective periods. The Bhāṣyagranthas were written in order to safeguard Vedic literature, as well as to make the common people aware of the doctrines in it. They have a prominent role in revealing the secret meaning of the Vedic sūktas and also the philosophical texts which are written in concise form known as sūtras. Such most complicated textual portions were interpreted by various scholars, by way of Bhāṣyas. The Bhāṣya is defined in such words as

सूत्रार्थो वर्ण्यते यत्र पदैः सूत्रानुसारिभिः  
स्वपदानि च वर्ण्यन्ते भाष्यं भाष्यविदो विदुः ॥

As the Bhāṣyas are the glorious philosophical writings, the objective of those works will be the true renderings of their meanings. In the introduction of the Gītābhāṣya Śaṅkarācārya clearly states: Gītāsāstra is the summary of the essence of the meaning of the Vedas and is too difficult to understand. All forms of literature— Vedas, Smṛtis, Purāṇas, Itihāsas and the like and also commentaries and sub



commentaries form the Bhāṣya literature. The purpose of all the above is to provide the reader with the Vedic teaching in a lucid, elaborate and palatable form. The Bhāṣyas are helpful in the proper understanding of our scriptural literature and they act as the key to unlock the wisdom hidden in the śāstras; and they thus lay down the sampradāya. Based on the origin of the Bhāṣyas, Yāska, in his Nirukta says: Seers had a direct, spiritual insight into duty. They, by oral instructions, handed down the hymns to the later generations who were destitute of that insight. The later generations, declining in the power of oral communication, in turn compiled this work— the Vedas and the auxiliary Vedic treatises— in order to elaborate their meaning vividly. साक्षात्कृतधर्माणः ऋषयो बभूवुः। तेऽवरेभ्योऽसाक्षात्कृतधर्मेभ्यः उपदेशेन मन्त्रान् सम्प्रापुः।<sup>1</sup>

An author is defined as a person who exercises freedom in the choice of words for constructing sentences यः स्वातन्त्र्येण पदानि वाक्यत्वेन रचयति स कर्त्ता।<sup>2</sup> Śrī Śaṅkara has written the Bhāṣyas according to pada (word) itself and the statement पदैः सूत्रानुसारिभिः is meaningful to his Bhāṣya.

The Bhāṣyas written by Śrī Śaṅkara on the Upaniṣads, the Brahmasūtra and the Bhagavadgītā— are acclaimed and accepted as the most valuable products of the genius of mankind. In order to find out the highly intellectual and inspiring approach the great Ācārya has made, one should go through the Bhāṣyas written by him. He was primarily a Bhāṣyakara. He wrote the Bhāṣyas not on books but on the bodies of texts memorized and handed down to the generations by families or schools of priests.

It is a fact that Śrī Śaṅkara has developed the doctrines of Gauḍapāda into a system. His influence of Gauḍapāda's ideas is mentioned by Maha Mahopadhyaya Vasudev Sastri Abhyankar in his interpretation of Siddhāntabindu. He states: Whatever Gauḍapāda intended to say in his kārikas, Śaṅkara has hinted in his Bhāṣyas. Śrī Śaṅkara propounded whatever Gauḍapāda propounded. He proved his observations by reasoning:

कारिकासु यद् गौडपादानामभिप्रेतं तच्छंकराचार्यैः ध्वनितम् । यद् गौडपादैः ध्वनितं तच्छंकराचार्यैः प्रतिपादितम् । यद् गौडपादाचार्यैः प्रतिपादितम्, तच्छंकराचार्यैः साधितम् । यद् गौडपादैः साधितम्, तच्छंकरैः सिद्धान्ततया प्रतिष्ठापितम् ।

Gauḍapāda's ideas such as reconciliation of the scripture, polemic against the causality, the objectless perception, etc. as on the serpent and the rope, (रज्जु सर्पः) the Universe— space and the jar space, (घटाकाशः महाकाशः) dream, (स्वप्नः) māyā, mirage and the like can be seen in the Bhāṣyagranthas of Śrī Śaṅkara. Accepting the leading ideas from Gauḍapāda he evolved a complete structure of well organized philosophical system. Through his Bhāṣyas Śrī Śaṅkara could give an exposition of his philosophy.

### The Methodology Used in Śāṅkarabhāṣya

Śrī Śaṅkara has followed the same methodology of the Upaniṣads in his Bhāṣyas. The Upaniṣads have their own unique style. Their exposition is in four different ways :

1. Dialogue with questions and answers

2. Narration and episodes
3. Similes, metaphors and illustrations
4. Symbolism

In the beginning of his Bhāṣya, Śrī Śaṅkara introduces the aims and objectives of the particular text and concludes it with a synoptic statement of the subjects dealt with. He explains each and every passage without leaving a single word or phrase. He supports his ideas with suitable quotations from authentic works. He chooses the right methods to express the maximum thought with the minimum words.

Another specific feature of his methodology is that he himself puts forth the objections and tries to answer them rationally through scriptural statements. For instance in the Brahmasūtrabhāṣya he explains adhyāsa thus :

कोऽयमध्यासो नाम अतस्मिन् तदबुद्धिरित्यवोचाम ।

Application of a narrative technique is another characteristic feature of Śāṅkarabhāṣya. By recounting different stories he tries to remove the monotony of the reader. This method helps to clarify a difficult and controversial topic in Advaita Vedānta. The method of Advaita may be briefly described as proceeding from diversity to unity and then from appearance to reality. Through the methods of Adhyāropa and Apavāda, Śrī Śaṅkara tries to explain Brahman. The first step is to use empirical words normally expressing objects to point out the Reality by negating the opposite significance. The second step is to superimpose or to attribute deliberately a

property or characteristic or feature on Brahman or the Self and from that standpoint to negate what is more obviously defined as not to pertain to it.

His logical interpretation can be noticed profoundly in his *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya*. For instance, being desirous of imparting instruction on the primary Self, the scripture follows the line of understanding of the common people. Thus it first adopts the Self as the body constituted by food and known as the Self to the extremely dull people. Then the scripture lets the successive one, which is really 'non-selves' to be grasped as the 'Selves' of the earlier ones, being successively inner than and similar to the earlier ones, like the images formed by pouring molten copper into moulds. By following such a process for easy comprehension, the scripture teaches us about the blissful one, who is the Self in the real sense. This is the more logical interpretation.

मुख्यमेव ह्यात्मानमुपदिदिक्षु शास्त्रं लोकबुद्धिमनुसरन् अन्नमयं  
शरीरमनात्मानमत्यन्तमूढानामात्मत्वेन प्रसिद्धमनूद्य  
मूपानिपिक्तद्रुतताम्रादिप्रतिमावत्ततोऽन्तरं ततोऽन्तरमित्येवं पूर्वेण पूर्वेण  
समानमुत्तरमुत्तरमनात्मानमात्मेति ग्राहयत्, प्रतिपत्तिसौकर्यापेक्षया  
सर्वान्तरं मुख्यमानन्दमयमात्मानमुपदिदेशेति शिलष्टतरम्।<sup>3</sup>

In another context, Śrī Śāṅkara explains अरुन्धती *ḍṛsthānta*. A man desirous of pointing out the tiny star अरुन्धती, first shows a nearby big star indirectly as the अरुन्धती itself. And then he discards it and shows subsequently the अरुन्धती itself. Similarly the Upaniṣadic text should have said: 'Neti' 'Neti', i.e., this is not the self. One of the basic methodological

concerns of Śrī Śaṅkara is to preserve the non-dual, immutable nature of the Brahman beyond the range of sense- perception and being describable only in negative categories. Sruti takes the help of empirical means to teach the truth, because there is no other means to communicate it. It tries to lead the people to the maximum height of empirical understanding of the Absolute so that they may be able to transcend this level and realize the highest truth. In some Upaniṣadic passages the Absolute is presented as *saprapaṇca* and in some others as *niṣprapaṇca*. For example, in order to discuss the *saprapaṇca* nature of Brahman, it proceeds to describe it as comprehending all activities, all desires, all odours, all tastes, and all gains; reaching all and so the Self complete, as ever to be speechless and calm. Then follows its identification with the individual self (सर्वकर्मा सर्वकामः. ....)

Śrī Śaṅkara's concept of the 'upādhi' is an attempt to answer the questions put forth by the Pūrvapakṣins. He has affirmed the absolute authority of the Sruti as his most methodological tool. In the *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* he says: The Upaniṣads are the only authority on the Brahman, neither the word nor its sense. Hence it has to be accepted just as it is presented by the Upaniṣads.

शब्दमूलं च ब्रह्म शब्दप्रमाणकं नेन्द्रियादिप्रमाणकं तद्यथा  
शब्दमभ्युपगन्तव्यम्।<sup>4</sup>

In another context he says: — A Vedic text should not be abandoned by imagining some contradictory meaning. न च प्रतिज्ञाहान्या वेदस्याप्रामाण्यं युक्तं कर्तुम्।<sup>5</sup>



The purpose of a topic is determined on the bases of six factors — introduction and concluding passage (उपक्रमोपसंहारौ), repetition (अभ्यासः), Novelty (अपूर्वता), fruitfulness (फलं), glorification by eulogistic passages (अर्थवादः) and intelligibility in the light of reasoning (उपपत्तिः). Śrī Śāṅkara utilizes these Mīmāṃsa criteria of Ṣadvidha liṅgas, i.e. six-fold marks and he starts his Bhāṣyas with an introduction to the aims and objectives of the particular text and concludes it with a synoptic statement of the subject dealt therein.

It is a common feature, as far as the Śāṅkarabhāṣya is concerned to make mention on the four important aspects of the scripture (अनुबन्धचतुष्टयं) at the very outset. For example:

इमं द्विप्रकारं धर्मं निःश्रेयसप्रयोजनं परमार्थतत्त्वं च वासुदेवाख्यं परब्रह्म अभिधेयभूतं विशेषतः अभिव्यञ्जयद् विशिष्टप्रयोजनसंबन्धाभिधेयवद् गीताशास्त्रम्।<sup>6</sup>

The introduction on the Īśāvāsyopaniṣadbhāṣya states : We shall now discuss these mantras briefly for which the fitness of the aspirant, the subject matter, the relation between the scripture and the subject matter and the purpose have been ascertained as stated below.

अधिकार्यभिधेयसम्बन्धप्रयोजनान्मन्त्रान्संक्षेपतो व्याख्यास्यामः ।

In Kathopaniṣadbhāṣya he states: अतो यथोक्ताधिकारि-विषयप्रयोजनसम्बन्धायाविद्याया; करतलान्यस्तामलकवत् प्रकाशकत्वेनविशिष्टाधिकारिविषयप्रयोजनसंबन्धा एता वल्लयो भवन्ति इत्यतस्ता यथाप्रतिभानं व्याचक्ष्महे।

It means: Therefore on having made the knowledge so vivid like a gooseberry in the palm with its several aspects such as the person competent for its acquisition, the subject matter, purpose and connection as discussed above these chapters of the Kaṭhōpaniṣad indicate the person primarily fit to study them, as also the subject matter, the purpose and the connection.

Upodghāta is one of the key features in the Bhāṣyas of Śrī Śaṅkara. It is a method of describing the topic by preparing an introduction suitable to the topic to be described with the purpose of introducing the text. It is also termed as sambandhabhāṣya. उपोद्घातं - प्रकृतसिध्यनुकूलचिन्ताविषयत्वम् । It helps the reader to comprehend the subject discussed. Śrī Śaṅkara clearly explains Anubandhacatuṣṭaya through the sambandhabhāṣya. For example युष्मदस्मत्प्रत्ययगोचरयोर्विषयविषयिणोस्तमःप्रकाशवद्विरुद्धस्वभावयोरितरेतरभावानुपपत्तौ मिद्धायां तद्धर्माणामपि सुतरामितरेतरभावानुपपत्तिरित्यतोऽस्मत्प्रत्ययगोचरे विषयिणि चिदात्मके युष्मत्प्रत्ययगोचरस्य विषयस्य तद्धर्माणांचाध्यासः, तद्विपर्ययेण विषयिणस्तद्धर्माणां च विषयेऽध्यासो मिथ्येति भवितुम्, युक्तम् । Another characteristic feature that differentiates Śrī Śaṅkara from other Bhāṣyakāras is that he begins each Bhāṣya by precisely mentioning the context of the previous chapters which helps the reader for an easier understanding of the text, eg., the seventh chapter of the Chāndogyopaniṣad begins as follows : षष्ठोऽध्यायः सदात्मैकत्वनिर्णयपरतयैवोपयुक्तः सप्तमं प्रपाठकमारभ्यते । The sixth adhyāya denotes the main objective of giving instruction on the Supreme Reality. Here he tries to determine the identity of the "Sat and the Self". Hence,

the seventh adhyāya concentrates on the things that are lower to the "Sat".

Definition is another important feature of Śāṅkarabhāṣyas which makes the meaning easier. Vyākhyāna is defined in such words:-

पदच्छेदो पदार्थोक्तिः विग्रहः वाक्ययोजना  
आक्षेपस्य समाधानं व्याख्यानं पञ्चलक्षणम् ।

As there is no difficult conjunction in Śāṅkarabhāṣya no grouping of words (padacceda) can be seen. The rest four namely पदार्थोक्तिः, विग्रहः, वाक्ययोजना, आक्षेपस्य समाधानं are appropriate in the Bhāṣyas. From these explanations the origin of words, knowledge of prakṛti and pratyaya (prefix and suffix) and the like are presented before the reader. For e.g. the sūtra जन्माद्यस्य यतः is explained by Śrī Śāṅkara as जन्मोत्पत्तिरादिरस्येति तत्पुणसंविज्ञानो बहुव्रीहिः।<sup>7</sup> This improves the readers' learning of the language, vocabulary, grammatical skills and so on. All the above mentioned descriptions highlight the influence of Nirukta in his Bhāṣyagranthas.

In addition to these, Śrī Śāṅkara tries to establish his Advaita doctrines on the bases of śruti, smṛti, anumāna, siddhānta, dṛṣṭhānta, Nyāya, pañcāvayavavākya, etc. He defines dṛṣṭhānta in such words: Illustration is that which elaborates the quality of a part and which is employed to exemplify the whole उदाहरणं नाम एकदेशप्रसिद्ध्या अणोपप्रसिद्ध्यर्थमुदाह्रियत इति।<sup>8</sup> His ability to explain the difficult terms through illustration is exemplary.

## Explanation

Explanation is another peculiarity of the Śāṅkarabhāṣyas. In his Viṣṇusahasranāmastotrabhāṣya, the term purusa is beautifully explained.

पुरं शरीरं तस्मिन् शेते पुरुषः । यद्वा अन्नेव्यत्यम्नाश्चर्ययोगाद् आसीत् पुरा पूर्वमेवेति विग्रहं कृत्वा व्युत्पादितः पुरुषः।<sup>9</sup> Similarly the terms such as कविः, आत्मा, वायुः, वैश्वानरः, अश्वरं, विष्णुः, सन्यास। etc. are well explained :

1 कविः क्रान्तदर्शी सर्वदृक्।<sup>10</sup>

2. आप्नोतेरत्तेरततेर्वा - आत्मा।<sup>11</sup>

3. वानाद् गमनाद् गन्धनाद् वा वायुः।<sup>12</sup>

4. वेवेष्टि व्याप्नोतीति विष्णुः विपेर्वाप्त्यभिधायिनो नुक् प्रत्ययान्तस्य रूपं विष्णुरिति।<sup>13</sup>

5. सनत्सुजातम् - सनदिति सनातनं ब्रह्मोच्यते हिरण्यगर्भाख्यम् तस्मात्सनातनात् ब्रह्मणो मानसात् ज्ञानवेराग्यादिसमन्वितः सुष्टु जात इति सनत्सुजातः इत्युक्तो भगवान् सनत्कुमारः।<sup>14</sup>

Śrī Śāṅkara's message to the society related to moral values is included in his Bhāṣyagranthas also. For e.g., he defines culture (Samskara) thus: संस्कारो नाम संस्कार्यस्य गुणाधानेन वा दोषापनयनेन।<sup>15</sup> In Brhadāraṇyakopaniṣad he discusses how one can become a सम्यग्दर्शी. He says: An Ātmāyājī who is purified by his actions becomes capable of seeing all alike (सम्यग्दर्शनं). For such one this life or a life in another will have the perception of the self... संस्कृतश्च य

आत्मयाजी तैः कर्मभिः समं द्रष्टुं समर्थो भवति। तस्येह वा जन्मान्तरे वा सममात्मदर्शनमुत्पद्यते समं पश्यन् स्वाराज्यमधिगच्छतीत्येषोऽर्थः।<sup>16</sup>

Śrī Śāṅkarabhāṣyas can be considered as a lexicon because he has given multiple meanings to most of the words. For example:-

1. प्रमिति संवित् स्वयंप्रभा।<sup>17</sup>
2. कवयोमेधाविनो विद्यावन्तः।<sup>18</sup>
3. शुक्तं शुद्धं विशुद्धमाहुः ; केचिन्मुमुक्षवः।<sup>19</sup>
- 4 गतिराश्रयपरायणम्।<sup>20</sup>
5. अवरेण हीनेन प्रकृतबुद्धिना।<sup>21</sup>

Interpretation of technical terms (Paribhāṣā) is profoundly used by Śrī Śāṅkara to simplify the word meaning. It is too difficult to understand the technical terms in Vedānta. Terms such as adhyāsa and apavāda are interpreted by him. Superimposition (adhyāsa) denotes the ideas that are set on the top of something else. It needs a metaphorical interpretation as well as a conspicuous result.

1. अध्यासो नाम अतस्मिन् तदबुद्धिरित्यवोचाम।<sup>22</sup>
2. अपवादो नाम यत्र कस्मिंश्चिद्वस्तुनि पूर्वनिविष्टायां मिथ्याबुद्धौ निश्चितायां पश्चादुपजायमाना यथार्था बुद्धिः पूर्वनिविष्टाया मिथ्याबुद्धेर्निवर्तिका भवति।<sup>23</sup>

Other examples are as given below:

1. संज्ञानं - संज्ञप्तिरीश्वरभावः।<sup>24</sup>



2. मेधा- ग्रन्थधारणसामर्थ्यम्।<sup>25</sup>

3. कामः - असन्निहितविषयाकाङ्क्षा तृष्णा।<sup>26</sup>

4. भक्तिर्भजनं तात्पर्यम् तत्परता।<sup>27</sup>

5. ज्ञानं एवं विज्ञानं - ज्ञानं शास्त्रतः आचार्यतः च आत्मादीनाम् अवबोधः।

विज्ञानं विशेषतः तदनुभवः।<sup>28</sup>

6. उपासनं नाम यथाशास्त्रम् उपास्यस्य अर्थस्य विषयीकरणेन सामीप्यम् उपगम्य तेल धारावत् समानप्रत्ययप्रवाहेण दीर्घकालं यद् आसनं तदुपासनम् आचक्षते।<sup>29</sup>

Thus the words in the Upaniṣads appear to be simpler for the students. Śaṅkara has even pointed out the errors in the Upaniṣadic mantras, as the mantras in the fifth chapter of Chāndogyopaniṣad-

अभ्रं भूत्वा मेघो भवति मेघो भूत्वा प्रवर्षति — वै खलु दुर्निष्प्रपतरं यो यो ह्यन्नमत्ति।<sup>30</sup>

Śrī Śaṅkara argues that here in the word दुर्निष्प्रपतरं a 'त' is missing. So the word may be changed as दुर्निष्प्रपततरं. He explains: The attainment of the state of rice, barley, etc. is very difficult. But more difficult than it is the contact with a body capable of sowing the seed. दुर्निष्प्रपतरमिति तकार एको लुप्तो द्रष्टव्यः। व्रीहियवादिभावो दुर्निष्प्रपतस्तस्मादपि। दुर्निष्प्रपताद्रेतः सिग्देहसम्बन्धो दुर्निष्प्रपततर इत्यर्थः।

Śrī Śaṅkara adds his own ideas on vyākaraṇa whenever doubt arises based on the mantras. In Chāndogyopaniṣad there is the mantra लोकेषु पञ्चविधं सामोपासीत पृथिवी हिंकारः।<sup>31</sup> Here

lokeṣu' is locative ('सप्तमी'). He adds: The locative 'lokeṣu' should be changed into the nominative (प्रथमा) to mean the world.

## Poetic Touch in the Śāṅkarabhāṣyas

### The Upaniṣadic mantra

द्वासुपर्णासयुजा सखाया . . . . . अनश्ननन्यो अभिचाकशीति॥  
which pertains to the two birds sitting upon the self-same tree— one eating and the other simply witnessing it — is one of the best examples where philosophy marries poetry to bring out perfection in the statement. Aesthetics, poetics and metaphysics have always been integrated intrinsically into the discipline. For example, both in the aesthetics and the metaphysics the concept of bliss or Ānanda is common. Taittiriyaopaniṣad says: Bliss should be identified as the Brahman आनन्दं ब्रह्मेति व्यजानात् -<sup>32</sup> In his Sāhityadarpaṇa, (Sāhitya darpaṇam —III-2) Viṣṇvanātha introduces the bliss of Brahman and the enjoyment of literature together as brothers. He says that while exploring rasa, there is no contact with knowable objects. He calls "rasa" as Brāhmaṇanda Sahodara. He says: सत्वोद्रेकादखण्डस्वप्रकाशानन्दचिन्मयः वेद्यन्तर स्पर्शशून्य ब्रह्मास्वादसहोदर ब्रह्मसाक्षत्कारसदृशः इत्यर्थः ।

Here what he refers to is the state of Savikalpaka Samādhi. The word 'rasa' is referred to as रसो वै सः। in the Upaniṣad.

It is said that poetic beauty arises out of the process of creativity. Pratibhā or creative power is comparable to

knowledge of self-realization that the sages experience as a result of the grace of God. It is a divine one as Aristotle and Shakespeare consider it. Vidyaraṇya says: words and their senses as well as excellence and figures of speech occur to the minds of the poet due to Pratibhā शब्दार्थगुणानङ्कारप्रतिभाति अनया इति प्रतिभा।<sup>33</sup>

The central inspiration to creativity is the search for the relationship between the inner world and outer existence. R̥gvedabhāṣya holds that the kavi can be defined as a seer of everything including physical objects. सर्वेषां बुद्धीनां सर्वज्ञतया क्रमितारं ईश्वरं सर्वेषां दृश्यानां दर्शयितारं भौतिकं वा।<sup>34</sup> Śrī Śaṅkarācārya also defines kavi as the far-sighted man of vision i.e., seer कविः क्रान्तदर्शी सर्वदृक्। A poet possesses the sixth sense, i.e. imagination, as W.H. Hudson calls it. Bhattatauta says: नानृषिः कुरुते काव्यं ऋषिश्च किल दर्शनात् । दर्शनात् वर्णनाच्चेव रूढा लोके कविश्रुतिः।<sup>35</sup> It shows that a poet has two-fold abilities i.e. vision (darśana), expression (varṇana). Being the owner of these two-fold abilities, Śaṅkara too is a poet. The synthesis of word and meaning, usage of guṇas, diction, alaṅkāras, etc. reveal the poetic exuberance of Śaṅkarācārya. Even though his image is popular as a great saint and philosopher, his stotragranthas bestow upon him the epithet of a poet. The Bhāṣyas of Śaṅkarācārya are written in philosophical vein and they aim at spreading the advaitic idea i.e., "ब्रह्मसत्यं जगन्मिथ्या।

His aim was not to include alaṅkāras in his Bhāṣyas. If it was so, the language in the Bhāṣyas would have been artificial. In the words of Vācaspati Miśra, Śaṅkara's linguistic

style is pure like Gangodaka and is majestic with prasādaguṇa. In Bhamati, he says"

नत्वा विशुद्धविज्ञानं शङ्करं करुणाकरं भाष्यं प्रसन्नगम्भीरम्।

Hence Śāṅkarabhāṣyas always have a superior place among all the Bhāṣyas. He clearly expresses his ideas through the usage of proper words. In order to simplify the advaitic ideas, he uses poetic technique throughout his works.

The usage of arthālankaras and śabdālankaras, diction, guṇas, clarity in the usage of language and so on, enhance the beauty of the Bhāṣyas and make them attractive. Alaṅkāras boost the beauty of language. In his Bhāṣyas, Śrī Śāṅkarācārya applies the śabdālankāras and arthālankāras in a very clear manner.

In order to clarify the advaitic notions he uses arthālankaras like, upamā, utprekṣā, rūpakam, arthāntaranyāsa, dṛṣṭhānta and the like. Upamālaṅkāra is used in many places, for instance, while describing the nature of Brahman, Śāṅkara says: The omniscient and omnipotent Brahman is the efficient cause of this world. In order to clarify this he applies upamālaṅkāra eg सर्वज्ञः सर्वेश्वरो जगदुत्पत्तिकारणं मृत्युवर्णादय इव घटरुचकादीनाम्।"<sup>36</sup> All the four elements of upamās are mentioned here. In order to transmit the mysterious truths he uses 'Rupakālaṅkāra'. For e.g., अविद्यानिशायां प्रसुप्तानि।"<sup>37</sup> Here the term 'Avidyā' is suitably identified with darkness. Utprekṣā is also used in many places. Eg. लौकिकाः अपि तथैव स्वप्नं कथयन्ति आरुरुक्षमिव गिरिशृङ्गं अद्राक्षमिव वनराजिं।"<sup>38</sup>

In the *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* he employs *anuprāsālaṅkāra* in different places तथा न्योन्यस्मिन्नन्योन्यात्मकतामन्योन्य-धर्माश्चाध्यस्येतरेतराविवेकेन. . . etc. Here the repetition of words or words with same meanings can be noticed. In spite of these, *alaṅkāras* like *Atiśayokti*, *Svabhāvokti*, etc. which help to explain difficult topics are visible throughout his *Bhāṣyas*. He has kept seriousness both in *śabda* and *artha*. There are many statements expressing the authenticity and majesty of meaning. For example, in the *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* Śaṅkara says- मौनं ज्ञानदिशया रूपं, पञ्च पञ्चका; पञ्च विंशति संपद्यन्ते। and in the *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad* he says- विनयेन गुरवो अभिगन्तव्याः।

There is a wide application of suggested meaning (*Vyaṅgyārtha*) in these contexts. For example, in the *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣadbhāṣya* the term '*mātā*' is defined nicely. He says one cannot insist on attaining maternity by merely giving birth, but by providing proper nourishment to the child. It highlights all the qualities that a mother should possess. यथा मातृमान् माता यस्य विद्यते पुत्रस्य सम्यगनुशास्त्री सा मातृमान्।<sup>39</sup>

Propriety (*aucitya*) is an abstract notion. Propriety is mainly expected in subject matter and the manner in which poetic composition is presented, that is to say, linguistic, and stylistic aspects. Even though the divisions of propriety cannot be seen in his *Bhāṣyas*, Śaṅkara has concentrated on the propriety of words and meaning. For instance, the Upaniṣadic statement सत्यमेव जयति नानृतं is commented by him suitably. He says: सत्यवानेव जयति नानृतवादी न हि केवलयोः सत्यानृतयोः केवलयोः पुरुषानाश्रितयोः जयपराजयोः वा संभवति <sup>40</sup> He means



that truth or untruth, independent of man, undergoes neither success nor failure.

In the Gītābhāṣya, Śaṅkara defines the term 'मुनिः' as मननात् ईश्वरस्वरूपस्य मुनिः. The word 'मुनि' etymologically means a person who thinks, but to Śaṅkara the word means a person who thinks about the nature of God. If this definition is not taken into consideration, any person who thinks of any subject will be called a 'मुनि'. Thus proper and arresting usage of words emphasizes Śrī Śaṅkara's pratibhā.

A tinge of Hāsyā is also visible in Śrī Śaṅkara's Bhāṣyas. In order to defeat his opponents he uses words like देवानां प्रियः, भलेमानस and the like. Based on vṛtti, rīti, guṇa, saṅghaṭana, etc. and similar concepts, the concept on diction is mentioned in many works of rhetoric. Diction, in this sense, is beautifully seen in his Bhāṣyas. Statements such as यथा पुनर्ब्रह्म प्रसिद्धमप्रसिद्धं वा स्यात्। यदि प्रसिद्धं न जिज्ञासितव्यं, यथाप्रसिद्धं नैव शक्यं जिज्ञासितुमिति<sup>41</sup> mention the application of prasādaguṇa in his writings. Sentences having long and short compounds and sentences, which are free from compounds, also are included in his Bhāṣyas.

The poetic beauty can be seen even while explaining the scientific facts. For instance, the feelings of plants are beautifully described in his Bhāṣya: जीवेनात्मनानुप्रभूतोऽनुव्याप्तः पेपीयमानोऽत्यर्थं पिवन्नुदकं भौमांश्च रसान्मूलेगृह्णन्मोदमानो हर्षमप्राप्नुवंस्तिष्ठति।<sup>42</sup>

The above-mentioned factors make Advaita Vedānta doctrines more glorious and attractive and also evoke a

fondness towards Śāṅkarabhāṣyas. The poetic qualities in these remove the monotony of the readers. All these project the interrelationship between aesthetics and metaphysics. Almost all poems are adorned with the beauty of the philosophical aspects; and the philosophical tenets are lightened through poetical qualities. So the poetic qualities in Śāṅkara's works may be the main reason why some of his statements are being frequently quoted even today.

### Different Nyāyas Used in the Śāṅkarabhāṣyas

A wide range of Nyāyas are used to simplify his Bhāṣyas. Among his Bhāṣyagranthas the Brahmasūtrabhāṣya portrays immense use of Nyāyas. Śrī Śāṅkara often uses Nyāyas as a weapon against his opponents. Some important Nyāyas applied by Śrī Śāṅkara in his Bhāṣyagranthas are given below.

#### अन्धगोलाङ्गूलन्यायः।<sup>43</sup>

This Nyāya is mentioned to discuss the insentient pradhana which cannot be implied by the word 'Self'. अन्धगोलङ्गूलन्यायः is, thus, a blind man who lost his way in a forest. A wicked man accosted him courteously and thus gaining confidence, brought a heifer and asked the blind man to take hold of its tail, assuming him that it would lead him out of the forest. In good faith, the blind man followed the advice, holding on to the tail tenaciously. As a result, he was dragged over rough ground and brambles, getting bruised all the time. Similar to this an ignorant man, aspiring for liberation thinks that the insentient non-self is his Self and he will not give up that outlook about the self and will not attain the ultimate aim i.e. Mokṣa.

## अरुन्धतीनक्षत्रन्यायः ।

This Nyāya is discussed in the first chapter of Brahmasūtrabhāṣya — Being desirous of instructing on the primary Self, the scripture follows the line of understating the common people. Thus, it first adopts the Self as the body constituted by food and known as the Self to the extremely dull people and then the scripture lets the successive ones, which are really non-selves to be grasped as the selves of the earlier ones, being successively inner than and similar to the earlier ones. Thus the scripture teaches the Blissful one. It is explained through अरुन्धतीनक्षत्रन्यायः A man desirous of pointing out the tiny star Arundhati, first shows an adjacent big star indirectly as अरुन्धती itself and then he discards it and shows subsequently अरुन्धती itself. The real अरुन्धती happens to be the one mentioned last after the indication of many stars which are assumed to be अरुन्धती. Similarly the Blissful One must be the primary Self, He being the inmost of all.

## अहिकुण्डलन्यायः ।

This is referred to in the second chapter of the Brahmasūtrabhāṣya. The sūtra itself states this — उभयव्यपदेशात्त्वहिकुण्डलवत् । The difference between the Jivātman and the Paramātman is related only to the upādhis. Both the difference and the dissimilarities are just like the snake and its coil. The snake in itself is not different, but it differs in its having a hood or an extended posture; so also is the case with the Brahman,

### अर्धजरतीयन्यायः ।

This is also mentioned in the fifth chapter of the Chāndogyopaniṣadbhāṣya. It says: Suppose a man says one half of this cow is young and the other half is old, it is called अर्धजरतीयन्यायः । This Nyāya expresses the particular view of acceptance of that part of a thing which is good and of rejection of the part of that very thing which is not good.

### काकताळीयन्यायः ।

This Nyāya is usually cited when an occasion to point out an unexpected and accidental event arises. To illustrate this Śrī Śaṅkara refers to a simple event. Once a palm fruit unexpectedly fell on the head of a crow exactly at the moment it sat on a branch of a tree, and killed it. The maxim of the crow and the palm fruit, i.e. काकताळीयन्यायः present in the fifth chapter of Chāndogyopaniṣadbhāṣya shows that if those jīvas are eaten by any of those capable of sowing the seed, they having attained the state of being sown as seeds enjoy the results accruing from karma.

### छत्रिन्यायः ।

This Nyāya is mentioned in the first chapter of Kathopaniṣadbhāṣya and establishes that the Paramātman is not a bhoktā. It is explained to dismiss the doubt of the Pūrvapakṣins. The Pūrvapakṣins express the doubt in the mantra.— ऋतं पिबन्तौ मुकृतस्य लोके --- The dvitīyā (accusative case) पिबन्तौ shows that both Brahman and jīva are enjoyers on account of the association of the latter with the one who enjoys on the basis of छत्रिन्यायः । छत्रिन्याय can be explained

in the following way: Looking at a procession, people say that men are moving by holding umbrellas, though a few men in the procession may hold umbrellas and many others may not have them. Yet on account of the company with those holding umbrellas, all are spoken of as men with umbrellas. Likewise, here, on account of the relationship with the enjoyer the Jīvātman, the Paramātman is also called the enjoyer.

### संख्यापूरणन्यायः ।

This is discussed in the first chapter of Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣadbhāṣya. Pūrvapakṣins say: If the Supreme has no misery and when any other entity with misery is absent, that attempt of the scriptures to achieve freedom from misery is useless. Then the response is: No, as in the case of removal of the delusion in omitting oneself in counting as the tenth, the scripture is meant for the removal of the misery in the form of delusion superimposed on the self out of ignorance. The Nyāya is thus clarified: A group of ten persons swam across a river. On reaching the other bank, one of them began to count so as to ensure that all the ten have reached the bank. But there were only nine evidently he omitted to count himself. Thus everyone in turn tried and every time the counting stopped with nine. At last a stranger who happened to discover this amusing exercise of the omission in counting the counter himself pointed out the error and thus helped them to rectify it.

### यक्षानुरूपबलिन्यायः ।<sup>44</sup>

This is mentioned in the Chāndogyopaniṣadbhāṣya. It highlights that efficient person should be given suitable power



and position. According to this Nyāya, jīva being a reflection of Brahman and exhibits relative reality (vyāvahārika sattā), attribution of jīva attaining heaven, etc. is possible.

### सोपानारोहणन्यायः।<sup>45</sup>

This is mentioned to make known the things which are subtler. The subtler starts from the gross things (to the subtler) step by step. Finally the aspirant reaches the highest sovereignty that is different from these, just as one ascends the stairs step by step and reaches the highest place. It is also mentioned to explain the process of dissolution of the universe.

### तत्क्रतुन्यायः।<sup>46</sup>

This Nyāya provides an answer to the doubt whether one can attain Brahman by mere symbolic worship without thinking about Brahman. According to this Nyāya one receives the result of one's own action. Hence the attainment of Brahman is possible only for those who worship Brahman. Through these Nyāyas, Śrī Śaṅkara made his Advaita doctrines easily accessible to the common people.

## Observations

The secret meanings of the Vedic mantras and the philosophical texts are revealed through the Bhāṣyas written on them. Thus, by writing the Bhāṣyas on prasthānatraya, Śrī Śaṅkara reveals the hidden meanings of the śrutis and smṛtis. His language is lucid. He applies the right method to express maximum thought with the minimum use of words. Methods like adhyāropa and apavāda, mīmāṃsa criteria of

śadvidhatātparyalingas, etc. are used to unravel the hidden meanings. He profusely uses various laukika Nyāyas to explain the different portions. The poetic touch in the Śāṅkarabhāṣya deserves special attention. The harmonization of word and meaning, usage of grammar, propriety, alaṅkāras, etc. indicate his poetic skill. Śrī Śāṅkara highlights doctrines on his Advaita Vedanta gloriously and attractively by resorting to the aspects dealt within his Bhāṣyas.

## Notes & References

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5. Ibid — II -3- 6.
6. B.G. Sbh — Introduction.
7. B S Sbh — I — 1- 2.
8. Ch. up. Sbh- VI-4- Introduction.
9. Viṣṇu Sbh — 70.
10. Īśa. Up.sbh. — 8.
11. Ait. Up. Sbh.- I — 1- 1.
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13. Viṣṇu. Sbh. 16.
14. Sanat. Sbh.- I- 1.
15. B. S. Sbh. — 1- 4.

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22. B.S. Sbh — III-3.
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28. B. G. sbh- III- 41.
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31. Ibid — II-2-1.
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35. Kāvyaakautuka — P 379.
36. B.S. Sbh. — I-1-1.
37. B.G. Sbh — II- 69.
38. B.S, Sbh. — II-3-10.

39. Brh.Up. Sbh.- IV- 1- 2

40. Mund. Up. Sbh. — II-1.

41. B. S. Sbh.- I-1-2.

42. Ch. Up. VI. 2-2

43. B. S. Sbh. I-1-7

44. Ch up sbh- VI- 3-2

45. Ch .up.. Sbh.- VII- 1-1

46. B.S. sbh- III- 2- 27

## CHAPTER - 5

# Scientific Traits in Śrī Śaṅkara's Bhāṣyagranthas

Śrī Śaṅkara, the great philosopher was an intellect in all fields of knowledge. But scholars who were in quest of knowledge subjected only his philosophical ideas for study due to his image as a saint. Although Śaṅkarācārya was evidently a monk who renounced the world, he was not quite without interest in worldly accomplishments.

The peculiarity of Śrī Śaṅkara is that he tried to establish his non-dualistic concepts (spiritualistic) with the help of scientific examples even centuries ago, to simplify the doctrines of Advaita Vedanta and to spread them among the common people.

### Existence of Brahman and Its Power

The fundamental principle of Advaita Vedanta stated by Śrī Śaṅkara is – 'ब्रह्मसत्यं जगन्मिथ्या' <sup>1</sup> – Brahman is truth and the world is an illusion. He holds that the all-knowing (sarvajña) and all-powerful (sarvaśaktah), Brahman exists, and it is the cause of all movable and immovable beings. The Brahman is pure intelligence. In the commentary on Taittirīyopaniṣad Śrī Śaṅkara says: Brahman exists and this



act is known to us because the body and the senses in their association are seen to perform their vital and organic functions. This achievement of unity for serving a common purpose is not possible unless there is an intelligence which is not a part of this conglomeration. एवं वायव्याः ऐन्द्रियकाश्च वेष्टाः संहतैः कार्यकारणैर्निवर्त्यमाना दृश्यन्ते। तश्चैकार्थवृत्तित्वेन संहननं मान्तरेण चेतनमसंहतं संभवति।<sup>2</sup>

In the Chāndogyopaniṣadbhāṣya he says: It is through what is eaten and drunk, that the jīva stays in the body and the character of what is eaten and drunk is always in keeping with the karma of jīva. अशितपीताभ्यां देहे जीवस्तिष्ठति। ते च अशितपीते जीवकर्मानुसारिणी।<sup>3</sup> He further says that even immovable (including plants) are endowed with sentience (cetana) 'चेतनावन्तः स्थावराः।'<sup>4</sup>

From the conscious Brahman to the distinct creations, pleasure, sorrow, etc. originate. To explain this Śrī Śaṅkara gives an example. He says: Even though stones possess the common attributes of having been formed from earth, there is a great diversity among them. Some are precious jewels like diamond, vaidūrya, etc. others are of medium value like crystal etc, while still others are worthless pieces of stone to be used for pelting at dogs, crows, etc. It is also seen that though the same kind of seeds grow on the same soil, there is a great variety in their leaves, flowers, fruits, odour, taste, etc. when they sprout. Also from the same food originate the different products like blood, hair, etc. So it is justifiable that even for the non-dual Brahman, there are such distinctions as becoming the embodied Soul and God, and the different

products like the earth, etc. 'पृथिव्यन्नादिदृष्टान्त-  
पृथिवीत्वसामान्यान्वितानामप्यग्मनां केचिन्महार्हाः मणयो वज्रवैदूर्यादयोऽन्ते  
मध्यमवीर्या सूर्यकान्तादयोऽन्ये प्रहीणाः इव वायमप्रक्षेपणार्हाः पापान्  
इत्यनेकविधं वैचित्र्यं दृश्यते ..... कार्यवैचित्र्यं चापलभ्यते  
इत्यतस्तदननुपपत्तिः'।<sup>1</sup>

Śrī Śaṅkara argues that Brahman possesses the fullest power and it does not have to depend on anything else for imparting an excellence to that power. The following observation illustrates this: - 'यथा हि लोके क्षीरं जलं वा स्वयमेव दधिहिमभावेन परिणमते अनपेक्ष्य बाह्यं साधनं तथेहापि भविष्यति'<sup>2</sup>. It means, in the world, milk or water gets transformed into curds or ice by itself without depending on any additional thing. But the opponents' view is that without any help of external accessories, how can there be any creatorship for Brahman? They claim that Brahman is not the cause of the Universe. Quoting the above example, the opponents ask in order to change milk into curd, they have to depend on external factors like heat, etc. Śrī Śaṅkara answers: Whatever may be the transformation, whatever its extent, it is milk itself that undergoes that modification, while heat etc, merely accelerate the process. If it had any intrinsic capacity to turn into curds, then it could not have been forcibly transformed into curds even by heat etc. for neither air nor space can be forced by heat etc. to become curds. An accession of paraphernalia only perfects the capacity of milk. The scientific aspect in this analogy is that the three states of water — solid (ice), liquid (water) and gas (vapour) are inter-changeable.

In another context Śrī Śaṅkara argues that the nirguṇa Brahman also can have activeness (pravartakatvam). He illustrates — अयस्कान्तमणिदृष्टान्तः- यथायस्कान्तो मणिः स्वयमेव प्रवृत्तिरहितोऽप्ययसः प्रवर्तको भवति यथा वा रूपादयो विषयाः स्वयं प्रवृत्तिरहितोऽपि चक्षुरादीनां प्रवर्तका भवन्ति, एवं प्रवृत्तिरहितोऽरीश्वरः सर्वगतः सर्वात्मा सर्वज्ञः सर्वशक्तिश्च सन् सर्वं प्रवर्तयेदित्युपपन्नम्।<sup>7</sup> It is in the second chapter of his Brahmasūtrabhāṣya. The Sāmkhyas (as the Pūrvapakṣins) consider prakṛti as acetana and having kriyāśīla and also accept it as the root cause of this Universe. According to the Vedānta, an insentient (acetana) being cannot have the tendency to act. Śrī Śaṅkara exemplifies this by pointing out that insentient things like the chariot, etc. are seen to have a tendency to act only when in association with a sentient (cetana) being. Then the Sāmkhyas reply: If there is no tendency in insentient prakṛti to act, even a sentient cannot act since a sentient being acts only in association with the insentient. Śrī Śaṅkara replies: This is true, a cetana, being alone, cannot act; but, in association with the insentient, it begins to act. The tendency to act is derived from the sentient. According to the materialists a cetana sarīra is seen to be the force of the insentient chariots, etc. It means that a sentient is the impeller of action in insentient; and this viewpoint is undisputed. The Sāmkhyas strongly oppose this view by saying that only the one which has the power to act can make something active. Therefore the Brahman which is pure consciousness and inactive cannot have the attributes to impart any tendency to others.

As a reply to this opinion of the Sāṃkhya, Śrī Śaṅkara gives the analogy of ayaskānta (magnet). Something bereft of any tendency to act can still impart this to others. Even though a magnet as such possesses no tendency to act when it comes close to an iron piece, it has the tendency to attract. The impeller of everything is Brahman, the omniscient and the omnipotent which is itself free from any tendency to act. The scientific theory in the 'ayaskantamani' is that repulsion with two bodies is a definite proof that both of them are charged. Śrī Śaṅkara says: When the guṇas get the nature of aṅga and aṅgi, action starts.

The same idea is stated in the Gītābhāṣya also. It is described as a pūrvapakṣa. Just as the magnet, though not acting itself, makes the metal revolve and holds in itself, the main doer motivates the Self, i.e. the action of the body and the like can be said to be that of the Self, since its fruit accrues to the Self. Then Śrī Śaṅkara replies: This is not correct, for in such an event the non-doer will have to be regarded as the doer. In fact it is incorrect to say that on account of the activities of the body the actionless shall become the doer and the enjoyer, but all these take place due to māyā.

### Theory of Dissolution and theory of Reflection

Brahman is vijñānaghana (solid mass of intelligence). Through the cessation of ignorance, one can attain this state of Brahman. Then it has no particular consciousness. To show this Śrī Śaṅkara narrates सैन्धवखिल्यदृष्टान्तः - उदके सिन्धौ स्वयोनौ प्रक्षिप्ताः उदकमेव विलीयमनुविलीयते



यत्तत्त्वमैतैजससम्पर्कात्कान्यप्राप्तिः खित्यस्य स्वयोनिसम्पर्कादपगच्छति तदुदकस्य विलयनं तदनु सैन्धवखित्यो विलीयत इत्युच्यते । तदेतदतः उदकमेवानुविलीयतेति।<sup>8</sup> The 'Sindhu' is water, because it flows. That which is a modification or product of water is 'saindhava' or salt. 'Khilya' is the same as khila (a lump). A lump of salt dropped into water (its cause) dissolves with the dissolution of (its component) water. A lump through its connection with particles of the earth and heat gets solidified and it disappears when the lump comes into contact with water. This is the dissolution of the (component) water and along with it, the lump of salt is said to be dissolved. Similar to this, when the differences created by ignorance are gone, the universe becomes one without a second, the 'great reality'. Then the effects are dissolved into their causes.

Brahman is all-pervasive (sarvavyāpakah) and it is known by different names due to avidya. To simplify this Śāṅkara explains in his Bhāṣya of Taittirīyopaniṣad. रात्रि एवं दिवसदृष्टान्तः। It says : In fact the sun is continuously shining, day and nights are only due to the rotation of the earth. ते च पुनर्नामरूपे सवितर्यहोरात्रे इव कल्पिते न परमार्थतो विद्यमाने।<sup>9</sup> Similarly the whole world is Brahman itself and its real nature is hidden by the diversity of the world.

Brahman is not born. There is none other than Himself, who is the cause of His birth. In the Muṇḍakopaniṣadbhāṣya he mentions: जलबुद्बुदादिदृष्टान्तः -अजो न जायते कूढस्थश्चित्समोऽन्यस्य जन्मनिमित्तस्य चाभावाद्यथा जलबुद्बुदादिर्वाय्वादि।<sup>10</sup> It means the bubbles in water are not different from water, but they are



formed by wind. Like that they dissolve in the water itself. Brahman is 'ekam' and 'kūṭastham'.

In order to explain the oneness of Brahman, in his Bhāṣya of Viṣṇusahasranāma, Śrī Śaṅkara states 'आदित्य प्रतिबिम्ब दृष्टान्तः - यथा आदित्यो एक एवानेकेषु जलभाजनेषु अनेकवत्प्रतिभासते एवं अनेकेषु शरीरेषु एक एवात्मा अनेकवत्प्रतिभासते इत्यादि साधर्म्याद्वा आदित्यः'।<sup>11</sup> The meaning is as the Sun reflects itself as many in several reservoirs of water (the diversity of adjuncts), the one Ātman shows itself in as many bodies, and hence the Ātman is in resemblance to the Sun. But these differences of adjuncts do not attach Brahman. In his Bhagavadgītābhāṣya, Śrī Śaṅkara states 'विपजात कृमिदृष्टान्तः - स्वभावनियतं कर्म कुर्वाणो विपजात इव कृमिः किञ्चिदपि नाप्नोतीत्युक्तम्'।<sup>12</sup> It has been asserted that as a worm born in poison remains unharmed while dwelling in poison, one who is engaged in actions that are innate to it, does not incur any sin. We know that nowadays pouring mixture of D.D.T. cannot destroy ants as they have gained the power to resist.

The dawn of knowledge on the self annihilates ignorance and the sense of diversity ends with it. The diversity happens only when it is based on different adjuncts. To clarify this Śrī Śaṅkara says: न तैमिरिकदृष्ट्याऽध्यारोपितस्य द्विचन्द्रादेः तिमिरापगमे शेषोऽवतिष्ठते।<sup>13</sup> The one perceiving two moons due to a defect in the eye does not continue to do so after the defect has been remedied. The eye lens of a person affected by cataract becomes opaque and there forms a membrane in front of the eye and it causes two refractive indexes.

Knowledge will shed its serene light when the ignorance is removed. Śrī Śaṅkara describes this through *malinadarpaṇadṛṣṭanta*'. It says: By removing the blemishes such as attachment, resulting from the contact of the senses with the sensory objects, it becomes serene and calm like a clean mirror or pure water. Like wise this knowledge will shine there. The scientific fact behind this is that the materials such as smoked glass, muddy water, etc. transmit only a small part of the light rays and so they are called translucent.

The fire of knowledge burns the evil seeds of ignorance, desires, etc. Śrī Śaṅkara states in his *Bhagavadgītābhāṣya*: बीजान्युपदग्धानि न रोहन्ति यथापुनः ज्ञान दग्धैस्तथा क्लेशैर्नात्मा सम्पद्यते पुनः -<sup>14</sup> As the seeds that have been burnt by fire do not sprout, the evil seeds of ignorance, desires, etc. after being burned by the fire of knowledge, do not germinate to give the next body to the soul.

## Diversity in Creation

According to Śrī Śaṅkara, Brahman is nitya (eternal), vibhu (almighty) and pure consciousness is the cause of both sentient and insentient beings. Then a doubt arises. If Brahman is cetanasvarūpa the beings originating from it also must have cetana and not acetana. So Brahman is not the efficient and material cause of this universe, but the *triguṇātmiḥ prakṛti* is the cause. Answering this he explains केशनखगोमयादि दृष्टान्तः - दृश्यते हि लोके चेतनत्वेन प्रसिद्धेभ्यः पुरुषेभ्यः विलक्षणानां केशनखादीनामुत्पत्तिः अचेतनत्वेन च प्रसिद्धेभ्यो गोमयादिभ्यो वृश्चिकादीनाम्।<sup>15</sup> The sentient beings like scorpion, worm, etc.

originate from the insentient cow-dung. Also the insentient like the nails, hairs, etc. from the sentient body. Similarly both the sentient and insentient beings originate from Brahman itself. Scientists may say that the cow-dung is only a breeding place for worms. It supplies only the material needs of the microscopic germs and scorpions that lay their eggs in it. But here we can understand the fact that the requirements such as dampness, heat, etc. are also insentient.

Brahman is consciousness among the conscious living beings. In the Kathopaniṣadbhāṣya Śrī Śaṅkara describes अग्निनिमित्तदाहकत्वं'. Burning is the nature of fire. चेतनश्चेतनानां चेतयितृणां ब्रह्मादीनां प्राणिनां अग्निनिमित्तमिव दाहकत्वं अनग्नीनामुदकादीनामात्मचैतन्यनिमित्तमेव चेतयितृत्वमन्येषाम्।<sup>16</sup> Since it is due to fire that water, etc. which are not fire, too become capable of burning. Thus the consciousness in all beings derives the power from the consciousness of the Self. Apart from these, there are many scientific examples such as vatakaṇikādr̥ṣṭānta which explain that a gross body originates from a subtle body. In the eighth chapter of the Chāndogyopaniṣad Śrī Śaṅkara explains all the elements, including ākāśa as material (भौतिकं). स्वतस्तु यावान्वै परिमाणतो आकाशस्य भौतिकता।

Brahman is the efficient and the material cause of this universe. Brahman though conscious, will not depend on external means. It is explained in his Brahmasūtrabhāṣya. The cause behind the origin of spider's web is discussed in the form of a pūrvapakṣa. The Pūrvapakṣin ascertains that when the Vedantin takes up God and others as synonyms to

Brahman, they do not bear any insentient bodies themselves of God and his manifestations and the conscious powers in the shape of other bodies. For example in the case of the spider it is the saliva that becomes solidified and turns into thread for capturing smaller insects. तन्तुनाभस्य च क्षुद्रतरजन्तु भक्षणाल्लाला कठिनतामापद्यमाना तन्तुर्भवति।<sup>17</sup> By supporting this phenomenon Śrī Śaṅkara says: Similar to this spider's web, the Brahman though conscious, will not depend on external means. Therefore, what is implied by the sāstrakāra is that there cannot be any such invariable rule that the power of everybody must conform to that of somebody we are familiar with.

Consciousness is all-pervading (सर्वव्यापी) but it is unperceivable. Śrī Śaṅkara says that it is perceived upto the tip of the nail (आ नखाग्रेभ्यो नखाग्रमर्यादं आत्मनश्चैतन्यमुपलभ्यते।), as a razor lies in a sheath occupying a part of it or as fire rests in the wood but pervading it entirely. So does the self dwell in the body pervading it in a general and particular manner. In the body it is perceived as doing the act of breathing or as fire is perceived when two pieces of wood are rubbed together.

Śrī Śaṅkara states that the defects of sacrifices become well remedied by Brahmin priests by the power of their words. Just as with borax-salt one solders gold, because it softens the hard metal gold, it makes possible the soldering of silver with gold, which is extremely difficult, joins tin with silver, lead with tin and iron with lead. लवणेन सुवर्णं संदध्यात् क्षारेण टङ्कणादिना खरे मृदुत्वकरं हि तत्।<sup>18</sup>



## Process of water cycle and theory of relativity

While describing rebirth, the process of water cycle is explained. The water that is drawn up by the clouds from the ocean and that pours down in the form of rain reaches the ocean again through rivers and becomes the same ocean समुद्रादम्भोनिधेर्जलधरेराक्षितः पुनर्वृष्टिरूपेण पतिता गङ्गादिनदी—  
— पुनः समुद्रमम्भोनिधमेवापियन्ति।<sup>19</sup> Laymen conceive the action and inaction in a wrong way. People have the feeling of *nivṛtti* in *pravṛtti* and vice versa. Śrī Śaṅkara explains this scientifically. To a man in a moving boat, the stationary trees on the bank seem to move in the opposite direction and remote moving object is seen to be stationary. The scientific theory behind this is relative motion. नौस्थस्य नावि गच्छन्त्यां तदभ्येपु अगतिषु नगेषु प्रतिकूल गतिदर्शनात्, दूरेषु, चक्षुषाऽसन्निकृष्टेषु गच्छन्सु गत्यभावदर्शनात्।<sup>20</sup>

## Consciousness in Plants

Being *Samyagdarśins*, our Upaniṣadic Ṛṣis were cautious about the plants and animals. Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad highlights similarities between plants and human beings. Explaining *Jīvanvṛkṣaḍrsthānta* in the Chāndogyopaniṣad, Śrī Śaṅkara reveals that plants also have consciousness and they are capable of experiencing agony and ecstasy. They suffer the fruits of their elements with their bodies. He further says that plants exist by absorbing large quantities of water and other substances from the earth through their roots and experience great joy. जीवेनात्मनानुप्रभूतोऽनुव्याप्तः पेपीयमानोऽत्यर्थं पिबन्नुदकं भौमांश्च रसान्मूर्लेर्गृहणन्मोदमानो हर्षं प्राप्नुवंस्तिष्ठति।<sup>21</sup> But this observation gained wide popularity only when Sri J. C. Bose



came out with the explanation of similar views in the Paris Science Congress in 2000, to the dismay of European scientists. In another context he says that human beings and animals depend on plants for breathing जीवनं च मनुष्यादीना प्राणापानौ ब्रीहियवौ हविरथौ।<sup>22</sup>

### Explanations on Physiology, Anatomy, and Psychology

Śrī Śaṅkara's physiological, anatomical and psychological explanations also emphasize that he is well-versed in material aspects. The sthūlaśarīra is produced from sūkṣma śarīra. It is traditionally accepted that the body is composed of pancabhutas such as pṛthivī, (Earth) āpah (Water), tejah (Fire), vayuh (Air) and ākāśa (Space). Although the body is earthy, it has the abundance of liquid in it. बहुद्रवं च शरीरं यद्यपि पार्थिवम्।<sup>23</sup> We know that 60–80% of body weight consists of water.

Taking the scriptures as pramāṇa, he gives a detailed account of the origin of body parts. The gross earth is eaten in forms of rice, barley, etc. Of that earth the grossest part goes out in the form of excreta. The medium portion builds up the flesh in the body and the subtlest portion develops the mind. It is to be understood, in accordance with the scriptures, that the products of water and fire also develop similarly. Thus urine, blood and prāṇa evolve out of the water, while bone, marrow and the organ of speech are the products of fire. The consumption of oil and ghee makes one clear and talented in speaking. तेजोमयी वाक् — Here the process of digestion is also elucidated. The jāṭharāgni or koṣṭhāgni (digestive heat) digests food of all kinds and revolves them into the elementary

organic substances of the body and holds in solution in the fluid substance called *rasa* i.e. digestive enzyme अग्निं ह्यन्नमद्भिर्द्रवीकृतं जाठरेणाग्निना पच्यमानं रसभावेन परिणमते। In modern medicine also enzymes are most familiarly associated with digestion. He describes the nature of human body parts like *Hṛdaya*, *yakṛt*, *kloman* and the like.

### **Hṛdayam—Heart**

Heart is one of the metabolic effects of food. The circulatory system consists of heart, blood vessels and blood. The heart is located in the middle of the chest cavity. According to modern medicine its size is of a clenched fist. This shape may be equalized to the shape of a closed-in lotus mentioned in the Upaniṣads. Śrī Śaṅkara defines *hṛdayam* thus: The heart is a lump of flesh of the shape of a lotus, which is the abode of the vital air, which flows through many veins, of which the stalk goes up and the face down and which can be seen clearly when a dead animal is cut into pieces and examined — अनेकनाडीसुपिर ऊर्ध्वनाळोऽधोमुखो विशस्यमाने पशोः प्रसिद्ध उपलभ्यते ।<sup>24</sup> Even though it is anatomically a single organ, it is divided into two — the upper chamber (atria) and lower chamber (ventricles) that remain filled with the juice of a subtle substance that is reddish brown, white, blue, and yellow and is also red.

Heart is believed to be the first organ to become functional. The position of self is placed in the heart (हृदि ह्येष आत्मा हृदयमिति तस्मात् हृदयम्)। Heart is defined as त्र्यक्षरं हृदयं<sup>25</sup> *Hṛdayam* (heart) has three syllables 'Hṛ', 'da', and 'yam'.

Śrī Śaṅkara explains this as follows — 'Hr' means to carry away or take to a distance. 'Da' means giving and 'Yam' means controlling. It is the name which perpetuates the system of body without any slip". स्वं स्वं वीर्यं ददाति हृदयं च भोक्त्रे ददाति।<sup>26</sup> Through the meanings of these three syllables, one can easily describe the function of heart. Heart acts as a pump house. Using blood as the transport medium, the heart, continually propels oxygen, nutrients, wastes and many other substances into the interconnecting blood vessels that move to and from the body cells.

As mentioned earlier the arteries belonging to the heart remain filled with the juice of a subtle substance that is reddish brown, white, blue, yellow and red. The yonder Sun is certainly bestowed with an admixture of such colours. Here he explains how the heart holds all these colours and the relation of the Sun with the nerves of the heart. It is a fact that the ultraviolet rays of the Sun help to produce Vitamin D in a human body which is essential for the formation of bone. The nerves in the body called 'hita' are filled with various colours such as white, blue, red, etc. and the colours of these fluids are so on account of the mutual mingling of the elements productive of bile and phlegm in different proportions. The heat of the sun called bile (pitta) acts upon a little quantity of phlegm that has been developed fully. By the heat of the sun, it turns into reddish brown. When wind (vāta) predominates, the same bile becomes blue. When phlegm predominates it becomes white. When the quantity of phlegm is equal it becomes yellow; and with the excess of

blood it turns red. He also suggests a reference to the texts of medical science for knowing how these particular colours arise — वैद्यकाद्वा वर्णविशेषाः अन्वेष्टव्याः कथं भवन्तीति।<sup>27</sup> The internal organs such as yakṛt and kloman are also mentioned. The lumps of flesh below the heart on the right and the left are called yakṛt and kloman. यकृच्च क्लोमानश्च हृदयस्याधस्तादक्षिणोत्तरौ मांसखण्डौ-<sup>28</sup>

The Praśnopaniṣad states that there are 727210201 nerves in the heart. Here the mathematical skill of Śrī Śaṅkara can be seen. He illustrates how we get this number. In the heart there are 101 chief nerves, each of these has 100 branches. Again each branch has 72000 branches, thus each of the 100 branches of the chief nerves becomes thousands, and thus we get the total number of nerves as 727210201. तासां शतं शतमेकैकस्याः प्रधाननाड्या भेदाः। पुनरपि द्वासप्ततिर्द्वा सप्ततिर्द्वे द्वे सहस्रे अधिके सप्ततिश्च सहस्राणि सहस्राणां द्वासप्ततिः प्रतिशाखां नाडी सहस्राणी। प्रतिनाडीशतं संख्यया प्रधाननाडीनां सहस्राणि भवन्ति।<sup>29</sup>

While describing creation in the Upaniṣadbhāṣya Śrī Śaṅkara defines Vidṛti — a pure hole in the suture of the skull. After creating the lokas and lokapālakas the Ātman thought on how the aggregate of the body and the senses could function without me? For this purpose the Ātman entered the body after making an opening in the suture of the skull i.e. Vidṛti. It is well known, while applying oil, etc. on the head their taste is being experienced inside the mouth, since it is a cloven one. सेयं हि प्रसिद्धा द्वाः मूर्ध्नि तौलादि धारणकाले अन्तस्तद्रसादिसंवेदनात्।<sup>30</sup>

## Five Prāṇas (Pañca Vāyavaha)

Śrī Śaṅkara explains the functions of the five prāṇas mentioned in various Upaniṣads. The one prāṇa has become the Self of all in the form of all bodies and all selves. The function of prāṇa is connected with the heart and is capable of moving to the mouth and nostrils. It is so called because it moves forward apāna which functions below the heart and extends up to the navel. It is called apana because it helps excretion. Vyāna regulates the prāṇa and apāna and is the nexus between them, as also the cause of action requiring strength. Udāna, which causes nutrition rising up and soon, extends from the sole to the crest; and functions still upwards. Samāna is so called because of assimilating what we eat and drink; it has its seat in the belly and helps the digestion of food. 'Ana' is the generalization of these particular functions and is concerned with the general activities of the body. Samāna distributes equally the oblations which are expiration and inspiration.

प्राणोमुखनासिकासञ्चार्या हृदयवृत्तिः प्रणयनात्प्राणाः, अपनयनान्मूत्र  
पूरिषादे-रपानोऽद्योवृत्तिरानाभिस्थानः; व्यानो व्यायमनकर्मा व्यानः  
प्राणापानयोः सन्धिवीर्यवत्कर्महेतुश्च; उदान उत्कर्षोर्ध्वगमनादिहेतुरापादतल-  
मस्थकस्थान ऊर्ध्ववृत्तिः, समानः समं नयनाद् भुक्तस्य पीतस्य च  
कोष्ठस्थानोऽन्नपक्ता, अन इत्योपां वृत्तिविशेषाणां सामान्यभूता  
सामान्यदेहचेष्टाभिसम्बन्धिनी वृत्तिः।<sup>31</sup>

## Mind

The skillfulness of the body and the senses results from mind alone. सर्वस्य कार्यकारणस्य सामर्थ्यं मनःकृतमेव।<sup>32</sup> It is also



said that those who are endowed with mental strength are seen to be powerful in the world मानयेन हि ब्रह्मेन संपन्नाः ब्रह्मिणां दृश्यन्ते लोके।<sup>33</sup> Śrī Śaṅkara argues that if the mind that discriminates was not there, how could there be such discrimination through mere touch. Sense organs cannot perceive their respective objects unless the mind joins with them. The formation of mind is described in his Bhāṣya on Chāndogyaopaniṣad. The subtlest constituent of the eaten food rising up enters the heart and the arteries called 'hitā', and sustains the aggregate of the sense organs and becomes mind. Hence, the subtlest part of the food becomes transformed into mind and strengthens it. He also adds: Being a transformation of food the mind is purely a physiological or materialistic source. अन्नोपचितत्वान्मनसो भौतिकत्वमेव।<sup>34</sup> Being composed of the purest and finest type of matter the mind has the capacity to transmit consciousness just as a glass sheet has the power to transmit sunlight.

It is through the mind that everybody sees and hears; vision and the like are impossible when the mind is engaged. Mind is the instrument of perception of objects of all the three periods of time and free from evils. It is also the means of perception of everything that is subtle and hidden. Hence it is said to be the divine eye.

### Observations

The commentary of Śrī Śaṅkara can be accepted as the world's most ancient and lofty attestation of the science of the Self. We can see that Śrī Śaṅkara has given scientific

explanations for certain unexplored facts which have been neglected for a very long period. He has given hints for further research which unfortunately remained unnoticed till recent times. Though Śrī Śaṅkara was a great intellect, the scholars who were in quest of knowledge subjected only his philosophical ideas for study. This may be due to his image as a Saint. These scientific facts which have been revealed show his deep knowledge in the materialistic aspects even though he is well-known as a spiritualist. But, it cannot be denied that there is an embryo of science and spirituality in the Bhāṣyagranthas of Śrī Śaṅkara.

## Notes and References

- 1 Vivekacūḍamaṇi,- 20.
- 2 Tait. up sbh- II -7-1.
- 3 Ch. Up. Sbh. VI-8-4.
- 4 Ibid — VI — 11-2.
- 5 B.S. Sbh- , II-1-21.
- 6 Ibid. II-1-24.
- 7 Ibid. - II-2-2.
- 8 Bṛh. Up .II-2-11.
- 9 Tait. Up. Sbh- II-8-5.
- 10 Muṇḍ. Up. II-1-2.
- 11 Viṣṇu Sbh-18.
- 12 B.G. Sbh. — XVIII-48.
- 13 Ibid. XVIII-66.

- 14 Ibid. XIII-21.
- 15 B.S. Sbh. - II-1-3.
- 16 Kaṭ. Up. Sbh. - II-2.
- 17 B. S. Sbh- II-1-8.
- 18 Cha. Up. Sbh- IV- 18-8.
- 19 Ibid — VI-1-10.
- 20 B. G. Sbh.- IV -18.
- 21 Ch. Up. Sbh — VI-2-2.
- 22 Muṇḍ. Up. Sbh — II-1-7.
- 23 Ch. Up. Sbh. — V — 8- 2.
- 24 Tai. Up. Sbh.- I- 6-2.
- 25 Brh. Up. V- 3-1.
- 26 Ibid Sbh. V- 4- 1.
- 27 Ch. Up. Sbh — VIII- 6-1.
- 28 Brh. Up. Sbh — I-1-1.
- 29 Praś. Up. Sbh III- 6.
- 30 Ait. up. sbh.- I-3-12.
- 31 Brh. up. Sbh. I.5.3.
- 32 Ch. Up. Sbh VI-7.
- 33 Ibid.
- 34 Ibid- VI-11-2.

## CHAPTER - 6

# Śrī Śaṅkara's Explanation on Pañcīkaraṇa — A Scientific Analysis

As a sarvajña Śrī Śaṅkara had a clear vision on all subjects in this universe and his explanations on them explicate the fact that he had neglected only the eternal existence of the universe. Accepting its relative reality he says: All objects are real till one acquires the knowledge of the Ātman (सर्वव्यवहाराणामेव प्राक्ब्रह्मात्मताविज्ञानात् सत्यत्वोपपत्तेः).<sup>1</sup> His explanations on triplication (त्रिवृत्करणं) and Pañcīkaraṇa (पञ्चीकरणं) — the processes which are related to the origin of the universe, also indicate his acceptance of that reality. He defines the world in his Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣadbhāṣya "The world means the abode where all creatures are born and who experience the results of their past works and which consists of action, its factors and its results. In the Brahmasūtrabhāṣya also the nature of the world is explained — "The world is associated with diverse agents and experiences, that provide the support for actions and results, having well regulated space, time and causation, and that, defies all thoughts about the real nature of its creation. The world revolves in all its states- जगत् सचराचरं व्यक्ताव्यक्तात्मकं विपरिवर्तते सर्वावस्थासु।<sup>2</sup>

## Origin of the Universe

How this world originated is a question of profound interest to all its inhabitants. Human mind is working hard to understand the cause of existence and the origin of the universe. Nowadays various researches are going on to find out the primary root from which the universe originated; and they concentrate on the matter — atomic and sub-atomic particles. But our great Ṛṣis — the scientists of yore— did not need any expensive and highly equipped laboratories for this comprehensive research. Their experiments were conducted in the natural laboratories of their own body, mind and the cosmic expansion hidden in the inner self. According to modern science this universe is formed of only three sub-atomic particles: proton, neutron, and electrons. But the material from which these three are formed is still unknown to it.

The Upaniṣads consider 'Brahman' (which is derived from the root 'Bṛh' means to expand) as the primary energy behind this Universe. It says - तपसा चीयते ब्रह्म <sup>3</sup> (Brahman expands with 'tapa' i.e. heat). It is true that anything in the world expands due to heat. Heat is a form of energy responsible for the vibrations of atoms and molecules. Śrī Śaṅkara says: Brahman is prāṇa; because of vibration—सर्वमिदं जगत्प्राणाश्रयं स्पन्दते, प्राणशब्दे परमात्मन्येव प्रयुक्तः।<sup>4</sup> This explanation shows the presence of energy. It is a scientific fact that one element is transformed into another by the emission or absorption of energy. In the beginning there were only simple substances called atoms, and later, compounds arose. There are certain elements which are simple in nature and they combine in



various ways to form the objects of the universe. Śāṅkarācārya calls these subtle elements 'tanmātras'. In Bhagavadgītābhāṣya he states: The earth refers to the rudimentary earth-element and not to the gross earth भूमिः इति पृथिवीतन्मात्रं उच्यते, न स्थूला।<sup>5</sup> The term tanmātra is a compound of two words 'tat'— its own and mātṛā—measure of vibration. The tanmātra is said to generate the elements beginning with Ākāśa. According to him the five apañcīkṛtabhūtas are pañcatanmātras. अपञ्चीकृत पञ्चमहाभूतानि तन्मात्राणि।<sup>6</sup> These tanmātras are called the subtle elements (सूक्ष्म शरीराणि). From these gross elements originated the subtle elements.

Our Ṛṣis were able to estimate the size of atoms in terms of the known units familiar to them. Śvetaśwataropaniṣad states: Tip of the human hair is divided into hundred parts and each part, in its turn is divided into hundred parts. Muṇḍakopaniṣad holds that such a size of atom can only be visualized and cannot be seen by the eyes. Śrī Śāṅkara also ascertains that life also emerges at the atomic and molecular levels. He says: Atomic prāṇas are subtle and limited in size. The atomicity of the organs consists in their being fine beyond sight and touch; but they are not like the ultimate atoms, for that would make their activities over the entire body possible अणवश्चेते प्राणाः : प्रतिपत्तव्याः । अणुत्वं चैषां सौक्ष्म्यपरिच्छेदो न परमाणुतुल्यत्वं।<sup>7</sup> The Nature of atom is explained in his Bṛhadaraṇyakopaniṣadbhāṣya. The extremely subtle particle of the earth called atom which is in the form of odour is itself dense with odour. It is not any more possible to attribute to it any thing called odour. However, if an atom is held to have

taste, etc., it is not correct, for that is due to the contact with water and the like. Therefore there is no example to show a partless thing as being endowed with many attributes परमाणुर्नाम पृथिव्या गन्धघनायाः परममृश्मोऽवयवो गन्धात्मक एव । न तस्य पुनर्गन्धवत्त्वं नाम शक्यते कल्पयितुम् । अथ तस्यैव रसादिमत्त्वं स्यादिति चेन्न, तत्राप्यवादिसंसर्गनिमित्तत्वात् ।<sup>8</sup>

The Upaniṣads elucidate the order of creation in a systematic manner. They say: तस्माद्वा एतस्मादात्मनो आकाशः संभूतः आकाशात् वायुः वायोरग्निः अग्नेरापः अद्भ्यः पृथिवी ।<sup>9</sup> Space came into existence out of the self, from space air, from air fire, from fire water and from water the earth. In the Chāndogyopaniṣadbhāṣya, Śrī Śaṅkara states: All these beings moving and unmoving, indeed, originate from ākāśa in the order of tejah, āpaha, annam, etc. सर्वाणि ह वा इमानि भूतानि स्थावरजङ्गमान्याकाशादेव समुत्पद्यन्ते तेजोऽवन्नादिक्रमेण सामर्थ्यम् ।<sup>10</sup> Accepting this order, he clarifies this in a different manner. In his Pañcīkaraṇa (a prakaraṇagrantha) he says: when Brahman is associated with its own power 'māyā', it becomes (saguṇa) and it is said to be the cause of the universe. From this the un-manifested form (avyakta) is formed. From the un-manifested the 'mahat' or 'Hiraṇyagarbha', which is the total vital force before manifestation, is originated. From this, Ahaṁkāra, the cause of individual creation (form of 'vyaṣṭi') from which the five tanmātrās took their origin. The five gross elements, in turn originated from these five tanmātrās. सच्छब्दवाच्यं अविद्याशबलं ब्रह्म ब्रह्मणो अव्यक्तम् अव्यक्तात् महत् महतो अहङ्कार अहङ्कारात् पञ्चतन्मात्राणि पञ्चतन्मात्रेभ्यः पञ्चमहाभूतानि पञ्चमहाभूतेभ्यो अखिलं जगत् ।<sup>11</sup>

Every object occupies space (ākāśa) as its base, and air (vāyu) as its controller or supporter. Compression of air gives rise to heat (teja). When heat reduces liquid (āpa) forms and when it is cooled again it becomes solid (earth). Even a microscopic cell occupies some space (ākāśa). It needs oxygen (vāyu) for its existence. It shows some temperature (teja) when it functions. Its protoplasm depicts water and there is some solid particle in the protoplasm which represents the earth. Thus life is nothing else but food or the five pañcamahābhūtas. This order is scientifically accepted. The Big bang theory also shows the same order of creation.

### Force of Gravitation

According to modern science, the universe is made up of matter, which is held together and is moved by forces. The force of gravitation is one of the basic or fundamental forces. It pulls or attracts other matter. Śrī Śaṅkara has given an explanation to this force of gravitation. He defines the force of gravitation thus: The well-known deity presiding over the earth favours the apāna's (air) activity by attracting or keeping in control the downward pull; otherwise the body, on account of its weight, may either fall down or ascend to the sky. तथा पृथिव्यामभिमानीनी या देवता प्रसिद्धा सैषा पुरुषस्य अपानं अपानवृत्तिं अवष्टम्भ्य आकृष्य वशीकृत्य अध एव अपकर्षणेन अनुग्रहं कुर्वती वर्तत इत्यर्थः अन्यथाहि शरीरं गुरुत्वात् पतेत् सावकाशो वा उद्गच्छेत्<sup>12</sup> The terms bhūmi, pṛthivī, and annam are used by Śrī Śaṅkara with a geographical connotation of Spacio-temporal earth; he explains the nature of the earth in the following manner: The dyuloka and pṛthivī ever stand supported, even though they

are of the nature of bursting and falling, since they have weight, of separation since they are a compound and are independent since they are presided over by a conscious deity which identifies itself with them. द्यावापृथिव्यौ द्यौश्च पृथिवी च सावयवत्वाद् स्फुटनस्वभावे अपि सत्यौ गुरुत्वात् पतनस्वभावे संयुक्तत्वाद् वियोगस्वभावे चेतनावदभिमानिदेवताधिष्ठितत्वात् स्वतन्त्रे अपि एतस्याक्षरस्य प्रशासने वर्तेते।<sup>13</sup>

The origin of the earth is well explained. It states: There on water, the only substance like a lump of butter, became solidified on account of the heat that acted on it externally and internally. The elements from earth down to ether are arranged one within another. The earth is also named as bhuvanam. It is so called in the sense that it is enjoyed by all beings beginning with the Brahman followed by all other creatures on it. Śrī Śaṅkara clearly states that the earth exists with force. (i.e. by strength alone earth exists.) It also shows his ideas on the nature of the universe.

### Trivṛtkaraṇa and Pañcīkaraṇa

Trivṛtkaraṇa and Pañcīkaraṇa are the two processes which discuss the origin of the universe. Śrī Śaṅkara explains 'trivṛt' as (trivṛtkaraṇa) in Upaniṣads. Trivṛtkaraṇa is the threefold combination of three elements teja (fire), water (āpa) and annam (Earth). Here the term Annam denotes earth. He says: पृथिव्येयमन्नशब्देन अद्भ्यो जायमाना विवक्ष्यत इति।<sup>14</sup> The nature of these elements is well explained by him. Fire is well known in the world as that which burns, ripens and illuminates and which is red in colour. In Gītābhāṣya the nature of water



is discussed. Water has the power to wet or decompose only objects having parts. Water is well-known in the world to be liquid, cool, fluent and 'white' in colour. Water is the product of fire. Therefore, whenever and wherever a man laments or sweats, it is from that fire (heat) that water arises.

The solid state of water is earth (Pṛthivi), being subjected to heat internally and externally. Out of that water developed the embryonic state of the universe, compared to an egg. A symbolic concept of an egg is referred to in the Chāndogyopaniṣad. It connects the theory of the universal egg. The egg is to be understood as a symbol of life. Life is believed to have come out of an egg. The Taittirīyopaniṣad also explains the concept of the egg. All symbolic representations indicate some unknown power or energy acting as an impeller.

The process of trivṛtkaraṇa is this: Elements such as fire, water and earth must be divided into two equal parts and one of these two parts should be further split into two equal parts. Then one half of each element should be added to one quarter of each of the other two halved elements towards the formation of one gross element. Hence the earth is the combination of  $\frac{1}{2}$  earth,  $\frac{1}{4}$  fire and  $\frac{1}{4}$  water. Combination of fire and water has also taken place in the same manner. Although the process of making everything tripartite has been placed, some elemental substance is found to preponderate in something. For instance, in fire there is a preponderance of fire, in water there is a preponderance of water and in earth there is a preponderance of the earth.



तस्मात्सत्यपि त्रिवृत्करणे वैशेष्यादेव तेजोऽब्रह्मविशेषवादां  
भूतभौतिकविषय उपपद्यते ।

सर्वस्य त्रिवृत्कृतत्वात्सर्वस्य सर्वोपपत्तेः।<sup>15</sup> This indicates the three states of matter i.e. solid, liquid and gas. These three states are interchangeable. A solid can change into liquid; liquid can change into gas and vice versa. Regarding the dissolution of element Śrī Śaṅkara says thus: प्रलयकाले तेनैव विपरीतक्रमेण ।<sup>16</sup>

In another context he explicates how a solid (salt) dissolves in water. He says a lump of salt dropped into water (its cause) dissolves with the dissolution of its (component) water. A lump through its connection with particles of earth and heat gets solidified and it disappears when the lump comes into contact with water. Upaniṣad uses the term Teja (fire) instead of gas. Śrī Śaṅkara says: तेज इति प्रसिद्धं लोके दग्धुं पक्तुं प्रकाशकं रोहितञ्चेति।<sup>17</sup> In the world the red colour that is seen in triplicated gross fire, is the colour of untriplicated original fire. Similarly the white colour of the gross fire is the colour of the un-triplicated water and that the black colour of that fire itself is the colour of the un-triplicated food on earth. Here Śrī Śaṅkara emphasizes that, apart from the three forms, there is not even an atom of reality. Similar to this the red colour in the sun, moon, vidyut, etc. is the colour of the untriplicated fire, white is the colour of water and black is that of the earth. It is a proven fact that in the presence of carbon, fire gets black colour.

Taittirīya Āraṇyaka says that there is lustre inside the vāyu (तेजो वै वायुः). It is a scientific fact that burning of any

fuel starts from the state of solid to liquid and liquid to gas and when it becomes gaseous the fire forms. Fire is more related to gas than solid and liquid. It is also accepted that each form of matter consists of the forms of the other two also. When a matter consists of the predominant part of solid and less quantity of liquid and gas it is called solid. It is similar to the other two also. And it is closer to the triplication mentioned by Śrī Śaṅkara. He says that in making each one threefold, each one in turn becomes predominant and the other two in turn take the secondary places. सत्यपि त्रिवृत्करणे क्वचित्कस्यचिद्भूतधातोर्भूयस्त्वमुपलभ्यते।<sup>18</sup> The difference is that in modern science the quantity of each element is not calculated in one single form. According to Śrī Śaṅkara the process of triplication is undertaken for the sake of making possible human dealing (phenomenal existence) व्यवहारप्रसिद्ध्यर्थं चेदं त्रिवृत्करणं।<sup>19</sup>

When we come to Pañcīkaraṇa it is very difficult to explain the combination of air and space as they are of invisible nature. Pañcīkaraṇa is the five-fold combination of five subtle elements including air and space. It is explained by Śrī Śaṅkara in the following manner, the five pañcīkṛtabhutas - space (ākāśa), air (vāyu), fire (teja), water (āpah), and earth (prthivī) must be divided into two equal parts. One of these two parts should be further split into four equal parts. Then to  $\frac{1}{2}$  of each element should be added  $\frac{1}{8}$  of each of the other four halved elements towards the formation of one gross element. Thus in ākāśa there will be five constituent parts.  $\frac{1}{2}$  of it will be ākāśa and the other  $\frac{1}{2}$  will consist of the four parts contributed together by all the other four elements. Thus

it is to be known in the case of the other four elements like air, etc. This is the five-fold combination of elements.

### Scientific validity of Pañcīkaraṇa

Is this Pañcīkaraṇa valid or not? When we take sea water, for example, the liquid state belongs to water, the salt in it belongs to earth (solid), water is associated with heat energy and it shows the presence of fire. Air exists there in dissolved form and so fish, etc. live there. Water occupies space for its existence. Hence water is a five-fold combination of elements. It is clear that the earth consists of all elements. John Gribin says: As well as being wet, the earth is a small rocky planet with an oxygen rich atmosphere. When we observe air, it can be understood that the moisture belongs to liquid form, dust particle—solid gas belongs to the air and fire exists there in the form of heat energy.

According to the Upaniṣads from ākāśa itself all moving and non-moving things originate in the succeeding order of fire, water etc, and all things get dissolved at the time of the final dissolution in that very reverse order, this world is the manifestation of Brahman. Manifestation is the result of multiplication which means division as well as limitation.

Space is a continuous expanse in which things exist and move. Ākāśa is space. Similar to this Śrī Śaṅkara says that the ākāśa is endowed with the attribute of sound and which creates space for all things possessed of forms. आकाशो नाम शब्दगुणो अवकाशकरो मूर्तद्रव्याणाम्।<sup>20</sup> Here he means the external space. The ether has been conceived as primeval, eternal and

motionless material out of which after successive transformations manifests this multitudinous diversity of the physical universe. The Taitirīya Āraṇyaka states that the earth is established in the ākāśa — आकाशे पृथिवी प्रतिष्ठिता।

According to Śrī Śaṅkara ākāśa is not a negative entity or mere absence of obstruction. It is a positive entity which is inferred from the quality of sound. There is no empty space or vacuum. Even in the depth of space a few micro-particles, dusts or some wispy bits of gas are floating about. Vortex theory also supports this. All the above mentioned facts explicate that each gross element consists of the parts of other elements too and so the subtle elements also will be a combination of elements. As a rule, the cause is deduced from the effect. If we take them as the five states of matter we have the solid, liquid, gaseous, aerial and special states corresponding to pṛthivī, āpah, tejah, vāyuh and ākāśa. Thus pṛthivī is the property by which matter can exist in solid state (e.g. rock).

'Āpah' is where matter exists in liquid stage (e.g. water), vayu is the gaseous form (e.g. air) and by tejah all particles are held together in all these states and ākāśa being the base of all, includes all the above. On creation two concepts of 'sat' and 'asat' are put forth by the Upaniṣadic Ṛṣīs. These are well explained by Śrī Śaṅkara in Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad. The world originated from non existence (asat). The term 'asat' emphasizes the non existence of manifested names and forms. According to him the world has been termed as 'sat' after the creation of the 'sat', so that the manifestation of names and



forms of the world is depended on the seeing things, for in the absence of the Sun, this will become dark. These dual concepts of creation, that is universe, originated from Sat (Being) as well as Asat (Non-being) and they make confusion among scholars. But Śrī Śaṅkara removes the confusion and explains the terms Sat and Asat in a vivid manner. The term Asat means the non-existence of manifested names and forms. The concept Asat must be understood not as total non-being, but the primal state prior to concrete existence. The primal state preceding the state of being was a state which human thought could not comprehend or could not express in words even if comprehended.

### Order of dissolution

As compared with the order of creation the order of dissolution proceeds in a reverse way. For this common experience is that the order in which a man ascends a staircase is reversed when he comes down. It is also seen that ice, hail, etc. formed from water return to water. To clarify these he quotes Mahābhārata in his Brahmasūtrabhāṣya. The end of the world comes about thus: Oh divine saint, Earth the basis of the world dissolves in water, water dissolves in fire, fire gets absorbed in air and air dissolves in space and space in the unmanifest – जगत्प्रतिष्ठा देवर्षे पृथिव्यप्सु प्रलीयते ज्योतिष्यापः प्रलीयन्ते। ज्योतिर्वायौ प्रलीयते।<sup>21</sup>

About the validity of Pañcīkaraṇa, Śrī Śaṅkara says: As space and air are very subtle, they pervade all the other elements even though they are not perceived. Motion is caused



by air. At the time of dissolution, when the Sun and the Moon abandon their own forms, the light and forms will become absorbed into air alone. When water dries up it enters into air alone, because air, indeed absorbs into it all these very powerful deities like fire and the rest. Hence, air is a symbol of absorption. When the fire goes out, i.e. becomes extinguished, it goes into air alone, i.e. it becomes one with air. Air purifies this entire world in as much as no purification is possible by that which does not move. चलन्निदं सर्वं जगत्पुनरिति पावयति शोधयति।<sup>22</sup> These elements from the earth down to this space are arranged as one within another पृथिव्यादीनि भूतानि अन्तर्बहिर्भावेन व्यवस्थितानि।<sup>23</sup>

Śrī Śaṅkara emphasizes that the law of Pañcīkaraṇa being based on the authority of the sruti, does not lend itself to being doubted. अमुष्य पञ्चीकरणस्याप्रामाण्यं न शङ्क्यताम्।<sup>24</sup> In his Bhāṣya of Chāndogyopaniṣad Śrī Śaṅkara has given a detailed account of dissolution. Hence, on the authority of the Vedic text it is firmly ascertained that the universe sprang from the one Brahman alone in a regular order beginning with the origin of elements space and the rest. अतः श्रुतिप्रामाण्यादेकस्माद्ब्रह्मणः आकाशादि महाभूतोत्पत्तिक्रमेण जगज्जातमिति निश्चीयते।<sup>25</sup>

It has been a great question whether water exists in any other planet other than the earth. Our R̥ṣis reveal this truth through their yogic perception. But the community of physical scientists is not ready to accept such facts. In this 21st century the above fact is accepted as true. The findings of the mission Chandrayan explore the presence of water and other elements

in the moon, which support the validity of Trivṛtkaraṇa and Pañcīkaraṇa. Śrī Śaṅkara says that as everything is triplicated they consist of everything.

### Observations

According to our Vedic Ṛṣis this universe originated from the cosmic energy (Brahman). This energy got converted into mass as hiraṇyagarbha (Avyakta) i.e., cosmic golden egg. When it bursts, subtle, primordial matter of three guṇas started appearing and when the same joined in appropriate proportion, gross universe was created in stages. Our ancient scriptures like the Vedas and the Upaniṣads never say that the world was created in a haphazard way or by accident. The creative urge in the absolute, its own potency and its knowledge of its powers, grow into a desire for self-expression. It is by brooding and continuous contemplative austerity (Tapas) that the creative impulse, which is the joy of creation, is infused. The above explanation on Pañcīkaraṇa, put forth by Śrī Śaṅkarācārya clarifies the nature of the universe and its origin.

These truths existed even before the time of the Ṛṣis and continue to exist even after their demise. The perception of the reality of a thing is an insight. The law of gravity existed even before Isaac Newton discovered it. Similar to this, the theory of Relativity existed even before Albert Einstein discovered it.

Hence, it is the duty of the Indians, to bring out Śrī Śaṅkara's explanation on the elements i.e. the process of Pañcīkaraṇa and also to correlate it with modern scientific

realities. It can be expected that in future, scholars will accept the explanations of Śrī Śaṅkara on Pañcīkaraṇa and they will be experimented in various laboratories all over the world and through this the name of Śrī Śaṅkara will be admired by the scientific community also.

This study indicates that science and spirituality are not contradictory but complementary. They do not have individual existence. This also creates the need to synthesize both science and spirituality, an endeavour on which has been made elaborately in the next chapter.

### Notes and references

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3. Muṇḍ. Up. -I-9.
4. B. S. Sbh. — I-3-10.
5. B.G. Sbh. — VII-4
6. Pañcīkaraṇa
7. B.S. Sbh- II-4-7
8. Bṛh. up. Sbh. — IV- 3- 30
9. Tai Up-II-1.
10. Ch. Up. Sbh — I-9-1
11. Pañcīkaraṇa - 1
12. Praś. up.-III-8.
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14. B.S. Sbh.- II-3-12
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16. Ibid.
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19. Ibid.
20. Ibid — II-1-1.
21. Ibid-II-3-14, Mahabharata XII- 339-29.
22. Ch. Up. Sbh.- IV- 16-1
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## CHAPTER - 7

# Synthesis of Science and Spirituality in Śāṅkarabhāṣyas

In India, science and spirituality are seen separated as different entities and they are used as two different streams. Scientists observe that everything in a certain sphere is made of matter, only matter exists, and mind, spirit, etc. are either illusory or can be somehow reduced to matter. The scientific spirit considers that everything in this universe, including consciousness, can ultimately be explained in terms of matter in motion. In spiritualism, spirit is primary and matter is secondary. The separation between spirit and matter which has been problematic in western philosophy ever since the time of Descartes, French philosopher and mathematician, has paved the way for the postulation of two realms namely philosophical idealism and scientific materialism. Such western terminologies are not meant here, but this work 'Śrī Śāṅkara's Bhāṣyagranthas: Synthesis of Science and Spirituality', aims at the synthesis of 'Ātmīyatā' and 'Bhautikatā'. Here it synthesizes spirit and matter. Synthesis is a process of bringing all the simple elements together to form a complex whole. Distinct from other philosophical systems Advaita Vedanta holds that the world (matter) is the manifestation of



spirit, and this spirit being an all-pervasive one, it is the matter itself.

Our Vedas not only emphasize the significance of spiritual knowledge, but they also remind us that without the knowledge and practical application of physical sciences it is not possible to eradicate poverty and attain prosperity. The Veda is the synthesis of knowledge, work and devotion. It is a synthesis which has guided the development of later synthesis in the Vedic (Upaniṣadic) tradition. The Upaniṣads continued the great synthesis of the Veda and brought in sharp focus a synthesis of various disciplines. We have Upaniṣadic statements which reflect tendencies both towards objective and subjective idealism and towards materialism. The Vedic law making for the world's stability is two-fold—embracing works (pravṛtti) and embracing cessation (Nivṛtti). The two-fold law of cessation is aimed at emancipation.

### Upaniṣad — Synthesis of Spirit and Matter

Even though the Upaniṣad is defined as the Brahma Vidyā, it is like the two faces of a coin of knowledge—material and spiritual. The Chāndogyopaniṣad gives a detailed account of the various categories of knowledge namely, Rāśi (mathematics), Daivam (the science of destiny,) Nidhi (The science of treasures or Mineralogy, Bhūta Vidyā (Physical science), Nakṣatravidyā (Astronomy) and the like. ऋग्वेदं भगवोऽध्येमि यजुर्वेदं सामवेदमाथर्वणं चतुर्थमितिहास पुराणं पञ्चमं वेदानां वेदं पित्र्यं राशिं देवं निधिं वाकोवाक्यमेकायनं देवविद्यां ब्रह्मविद्यां भूतविद्यां, क्षत्रविद्यां नक्षत्रविद्यां सर्प देवजन विद्यामेतद्भगवोऽध्येमि।<sup>2</sup>

The Upaniṣad consists of both spiritual and material knowledge. The Chāndogyopaniṣad declares सर्वं खल्विदं ब्रह्म तज्जलानिति,<sup>3</sup> which means that all this is Brahman, born from, dissolving in and existing in that. This Brahman is the absolute truth. All others apart from Brahman are temporal. This statement presents Brahman as the Saprapañca or the cosmic will i.e. all-comprehensive in its nature. It comprehends all activities, all desires, all odours, and all tastes, reaching all and so self-complete. It says: सर्वकर्मा सर्वकामः सर्व गन्धः सर्वरसः।<sup>4</sup> At the same time mantras like अस्थूलमनण्वह्रस्वमदीर्घमलोहितमस्नेहमच्छायमतमो....न तदश्नादि कश्चन<sup>5</sup> explain Brahman as the Niṣprapañca. It is in the Brhadāranyakopaniṣad, sage Yājñavalkya says: "Oh! Gargi, this is the imperishable which wise people adore, — not gross and subtle, nor short, not long.... lest the description should be taken to mean pure nothing. He says that if the ultimate was a sheer blank or non-entity, it could not have given rise to the world of appearance. It clearly states that Brahman has two forms one with form (Mūrta) and the other, without form (Amūrta) — द्वे वा व ब्रह्मणो रूपे मूर्तं चेवामूर्तं च मर्त्यं चामूर्तं च स्थितं च यच्च सच्च त्यच्च।<sup>6</sup> Mūrta is martya and amūrta is amṛta. 'Sat' is Mūrta and 'Tyat' is Amūrta. Sat is the material or bodily being; it is motionless, inert, transient and mortal. 'Tyat' is the immaterial being; it is eternally in motion and immortal. Descriptions of Vidyā and Avidyā in the Īśāvāsyopaniṣad, 'Sreyas' and 'Preyas' in the Kathopaniṣad, Parā and Aparā in the Muṇḍakopaniṣad, mention these 'Saprapanca' and 'Niṣprapañca' forms of Brahman.

This concept is one of the most haunting problems connected with the Upaniṣads and has remained the centre of discussion among the scholars for a very long time.<sup>7</sup> But studies reveal that the purpose of Upaniṣad is to establish philosophically the personal feature of the absolute truth as transcendental to material names, forms, qualities and actions. Brahman is not only an intelligent power but also a personality endowed with all the virtues that are beyond our imagination. The 'Saprapañca' conception must be understood negatively as signifying that the world is not outside Brahman and the Nisprapañca positively as signifying that Brahman is more than the world. There is no world apart from Brahman, but it is not therefore unreal for it has its basis on Brahman. Brahman is not nothing for it furnishes the explanation of the world.

In the ultimate analysis, this whole universe is identical with the Supreme Lord. The Upaniṣadic text एकविज्ञानेन सर्वं विज्ञानं does not support the vivartavāda of Advaita, which reduces the external world to an unreal state in essence. Even though everything is unreal by contrast with Brahman, within the world of appearances, some causal relations are pariṇāma, some vivarta.

The Indian intellectuals have contemplated and vigorously tried hard to understand the nature and origin of the physical world. The gradual transformation of this world is narrated in the Upaniṣads. The Chāndogyopaniṣad explains this. The world was non-existent before creation. It is so called because of non-manifestation of name and form. Then it was

motionless and inactive and then it became existent, by engaging in same activity and by producing an effect of its activity. Consequently, it became mobile and manifested itself with a name and form. After this it became gross and gradually transformed itself into an egg from water. This egg stays for a period of time, known as a year (Samvatsara), without undergoing any change in its form. Thereafter, on the termination of a period of one year, it burst open like the egg of a bird. Of these two halves of the broken egg shell one was of silver and the other of gold. The silver became the earth and the golden half became the sky. असदेवेदमग्रआसीत्तत्सदासीत्तत्समभवत्तदाण्डं निरवर्तत। सत्संवत्सरस्य मात्रामशयत। तन्निरभिद्यत ते आण्डकपाले रजतं च सुवर्णं चाभवताम्। तद्रजतं सेयं पृथिवी यत्सुवर्णं सा द्यौः।<sup>8</sup>

At the same time, it holds that the manifestation of the world is generally dependent on the sun, because in its absence, owing to pitch darkness nothing whatsoever could be known, and it is because of the sun that the world's existence becomes possible in the world. It also states: When the sun was being born, there arose sounds spreading far away with its rising and the setting: तस्योदयं प्रति प्रत्यायनं प्रति घोषा उळ्ळवोऽनूत्तिष्ठन्ति।<sup>9</sup> But the same Upaniṣad negates the rising and setting of the sun. It says — rising from there upwards, the sun neither rises nor sets. He remains alone in the centre. अथ तत ऊर्ध्वं उदेत्य नैवोदेता नास्तमेतैकल एव मध्ये स्थाता।<sup>10</sup>

The Bṛhadaranyakopaniṣad also describes the cosmic evolution. Initially the universe was only space. Gradually, it



condensed to form atmosphere and water. The Earth differentiated itself in the form of dense layer on the primordial water. यदपां शर आसीत् तत्समहृद्यत। सा पृथिव्यभवत्।<sup>11</sup> Śrī Śāṅkara views that the Upaniṣads refer to the external world and accord a reality to it consciously with the purpose of treating it as merely relatively real, which eventually appears as unreal as soon as the ultimate truth, Brahman, is known. Upaniṣads teach unity through multiplicity. They seek a direct, immediate and life-transforming knowledge of the Self and of the Real. Different symbols are narrated while serving as more direct aid to the realization of Brahman.

According to the Chāndogyopaniṣad, meditation (Upāsana) of names is the best way of realization. In the 7th chapter Sanatkumara advises Nārada to meditate on name, thinking of it as Brahman. He says: The Ṛgveda, the Yajurveda, Purāṇa, Mathematics, Mineralogy, etc. are only names. Meditate all these names as Brahman नाम वा ऋग्वेदो यजुर्वेदः सामवेदः अथर्वणश्चतुर्थ इतिहास पुराण : नामैवैतन्नामोपासस्वेति।<sup>12</sup> He says: Speech is greater than name, as it makes all these known by uttering words. Later he says that mind is greater than speech that indeed when engaged in the act of thinking impels speech to that which is to be spoken. Will (saṅkalpa) is greater than mind, when a subject is determined after discrimination, it follows the intention to perform it. Intelligence is greater than Will. When a man understands, he wills either to accept or to reject it. Then he resorts to meditation; then he urges speech; and he urges that speech to utter name.



Meditation means an unchanging current of ideas with regard to deities, etc. as presented by the scriptures. Understanding is greater than meditation. By means of understanding (vijñānam) alone a man knows the Ṛgveda, the Yajurveda, Mathematics, science of treasure, etymology, physical science, etc. Strength is greater than understanding. A single man, who is strong, causes tremble among even a hundred men who have knowledge. Then food is greater than strength. Therefore, if a man does not eat for 10 days he may still live, he does not see, does not hear, does not think, does not recognize, does not act and does not know. Water is greater than food. So when there is not enough rain, creatures come to grief and feel: 'Food will be inadequate'. Fire is greater than water. It is this fire having rendered the air motionless makes the atmosphere hot. Akasa is greater than fire. In akasa exists the sun and the moon, lightning, stars and the fire, and everything shoots up towards akasa. Memory is greater than akasa. Therefore even if many people should gather at a place will not think, and will not know. Hope is greater than memory, kindled by hope, the memory recites the mantras and performs scarifices. Prāṇa is greater than hope. Just as the spokes of a chariot-wheel are fixed in the nave, so also are all these fixed on this prāṇa.

At the end of this discourse Sanatkumara says: Which indeed is the joy-'that' is the indefinite — यो वै भूमा तत्सुखं नाल्पे सुखमस्ति भूमेव सुखं।<sup>13</sup> And he continues: The infinite is that where one does not see anything else, and does not understand anything else — यत्र नान्यत्पश्यति नान्यच्छृणोति

नान्यद्विजानाति स भूमा।<sup>14</sup> This mantra negates all the names which are unreal (anātmās).

All phenomenal dealings spring from the Self itself in the case of the man of realization. In the Kathopaniṣad Ātmāsvarūpam is presented by using the examples of agni, vāyu and sūrya. When agni is associated with an object, it also seems to have the same shape as the object (fire ball). Similarly consciousness which has neither form nor locus seems to be in the body and have the form or the body. The Īśāvāsyopaniṣad says: अविद्या मृत्युं तीर्त्वा विद्याममृतमश्नुते।<sup>15</sup> which means one can transcend mortality through Avidyā i.e. nityakarma and meditation and can reach immortality through Vidyā.

The Upaniṣads help us to reach this absolute state by means of negation of everything experienced by us as anātmā. This teaching is in the form of a statement of negation of the entire phenomenal universe. The absence of something can be established only after establishing what is being denied. All meditations are related to saṅuṇopāśana and they prepare the disciple for the final mode of contemplation as "Aham Brahmāsmi." The Upaniṣads advise the seeker to follow certain Upāśana, develop bhakti and then vairāgya and the rest, undertake listening, assimilation, etc. and attain liberation.

In all respects, a logical approach can be seen in the Upaniṣads. Being desirous of interacting with the absolute truth, the scriptures are written in such a way that they are also within the scope of the common people. Thus, at first,

it adopts as the self of the body constituted by food and known as the self to the extremely dull people; and then the scriptures let the successive ones, which are really non-selves, to be grasped as the selves of the earlier ones, being successively inner than the earlier ones like the images.

While negating, two important things have to be kept in mind

1. What is existent can never be negated.
2. What is non-existent need not be negated."<sup>16</sup>

Based on these two laws, the universe experienced by us belongs to a third category which is neither existing nor non-existing (Satasad vilakṣaṇam). The Upaniṣadic dictum 'neti' 'neti' denies the limitation that is being dealt with and then speaks of something more. Śaṅkarācārya says: This denial 'neti' 'neti' leads to Brahman and does not end in non-existence, as the text again mentions as 'Satyasya satyam'. The text speaks of something more than its name i.e. 'Satyasya satyam', its name as truth of truth. Here, the vital force is truth (Vyāvahārika satya) and It (Pāramārthika satya) is the truth of that.

अथ अत आदेशो नेति नेति न ह्येतस्मादिति नेत्यन्यत्परमस्त्यथ नामधेयं सत्यस्य सत्यमिति प्राणा वा सत्यं तेषामेव सत्यम्।<sup>17</sup> The term 'satyam' has two connotations, in the Dharmaśāstrs speaking the truth is emphasized as an important ethical value which is purely at the vyāvahārika level, while in the Vedantic context 'satyam' is to be understood as existence / reality or

consciousness. It shows that only through the vyāvahārika satyam one can attain the pāramārthika satyam. Similar to this the mantras like पुरश्चक्रे।<sup>18</sup>, तत्सृष्ट्वा तदेवानुप्रविशन्।<sup>19</sup> स एतमेव सीमानं विदार्येतया द्वारा प्रापद्यत।<sup>20</sup>, रूपं रूपं प्रतिरूपो ब्रह्मव and so on indicate the synthesis of spirit and matter.

### Synthesis of Science and Spirituality in Śāṅkarabhāṣya

It is a great question whether spirit (the Ātman) can be separated from body (matter). Śrī Śāṅkara often synthesizes these two in his Bhāṣyagranthas. In his Bhāṣya on the first verse of Viṣṇusahasranāmastotra Śrī Śāṅkara says : According to the root meaning, "viśvam" (prapañca) can mean Brahman or the supreme Being. Its root 'viśati' means enter or interpenetrate. In support of it he quotes Upaniṣadic statements: *Brahma evedam viśvam variṣṭam*. In the Chāndogyopaniṣadbhāṣya he states: It is the self in the form of the body that is to be worshipped here and also to be served तस्मादात्मैव देह इह लोके महय्यः पूजनीयस्तथा परिचर्यः।<sup>21</sup> In another context, he states: Since it is immobile one sentient being can have dual forms. Hence, there is identity between that which pertains to God (which is spiritual and divine) and the other which pertains to the individual body तस्मादध्यात्माधिदैवतयोरेकत्वमेव।<sup>22</sup> Here, the word 'Adhyātmā' is related to body (physical) and Adhidaivatā is divine that is spiritual.

The Advaita holds that Brahman forms the substratum for the empirical reality and is also conceived as the subject confronting the object. The same existence continues in a

different configuration. सदेव संस्थानान्तरेणावतिष्ठन्ते।<sup>23</sup> For instance a snake forms into a coil, and earth continues in different forms as dust, lump, pot, shreds and the like. All these are but different shapes of existence and therefore, it is reasonable that before creation, existence (sat) alone was there. Śrī Śaṅkara defines the term Sat as the thing that is pure reality — subtle, indefinable, all pervasive and pure consciousness — that is known through the text of the Vedānta. सदेव सदित्यस्तितामात्रं वस्तु सूक्ष्मं निर्विशेषं सर्वगतमेकं निरञ्जनं निरवयवं विज्ञानं यदवगम्यते सर्व वेदान्तेभ्यः।<sup>24</sup> In Śrī Lalitātrisatibhāṣya Śrī Śaṅkara explains the term 'Sat' in the following way: अपरोक्षतया सन्निति प्रतीतिविषयतायां व्यवहियमाणं सत्कार्यं रूपादिवत्तया व्यावहारिकसत्ताश्रयं पृथिव्यप्तेजोभूतत्रयं सदित्युच्यते।<sup>25</sup> Here the 'Sat' denotes the synthesis of spirit and matter. The term 'Sat' is expressive of a positive generic, entity सदित्ययं तावच्छब्दः सदाकृतिवाचकः।<sup>26</sup>

Existence is well-known in the world as that which causes satisfaction and produces joy as do things that are sweet, sour, etc. Even the mundane bliss is a minute portion of the Bliss that is Brahman. लौकिकोऽप्यानन्दो ब्रह्मानन्दस्यैवमात्रा।<sup>27</sup> The Brahman (spirit) is an unconditioned one whereas matter is conditioned. Since the unconditioned Brahman cannot be expressed and since it is devoid of distinction and is one, it is designated as 'neti' 'neti'. Denial cannot amount a rejection of the existence of the effect before creation. The effect waits in the cause. कार्यं हि कारणे प्रतिष्ठितं भवति।<sup>28</sup> As the cause is non-different from the effect the whole world (material) is a creation from Brahman (spiritual) and is non-different



from it — अतश्च कृत्स्नस्य जगतो ब्रह्मकार्यत्वात् तदनन्यत्वात्।<sup>29</sup>  
 The existence of Brahman can be realized only through the existence of the world. There also the synthesis of spirit and matter can be analyzed. Since there is surely nothing besides this Brahman, it is called 'neti' 'neti'. It does not mean that Brahman itself does not exist. Brahman can be accepted as matter as it is the nature of super-mundane entity.

According to Śrī Śaṅkara the fundamental principle of the Advaita Vedanta is ब्रह्म सत्यं जगन्मिथ्या जीवो ब्रह्मैव नापरः। i.e. all phenomenal and non phenomenal existence is nothing more than the absolute. This statement is mentioned in his Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣadbhāṣya where he says: Apart from the supreme Brahman there is no other entity called the transmigrating self. In reality the two aspects of the spirit and the matter are the two aspects of the absolute. Both the spirit and the matter are to be regarded not as independent realities but as aspects of the absolute. The spirit is the root of all consciousness and is the guiding intelligence in the scheme of evolution. The matter is the substratum of matter which is the pre-cosmic root matter मूलप्रकृतिः। Śrī Śaṅkara establishes the metaphysical identity of the contents of the three terms—Nirguṇa Brahman, Saguṇa Brahman and jīva. He holds that the śruti pertaining to the creation, existence and dissolution of the universe are only to make deep-rooted the idea of Brahman, being a homogeneous unity and not to make us accept the origin, etc. on a realistic basis. तस्मादेकरूपैकत्वप्रत्ययदाढ्यायैव सर्ववेदान्तेषूपपत्तिस्थितिलयादिकल्पना, न तत्प्रत्ययकरणाय।<sup>30</sup>

In the *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya*, he states: Even though Brahman is one, it is possible for it, by virtue of the position of divine powers, to be transformed variously on the analogy of the milk and the life. Brahman is possessed of the fullest power, it need not depend on anything else. He explains: In the world, milk or water gets transformed into curds or ice by itself without depending on any extraneous accessory – तस्मादेकस्यापि ब्रह्मणो विचित्रशक्तियोगात्क्षीरादिवद्विचित्रपरिणाम उपपद्यते।<sup>31</sup> The supreme self does not enter into the being directly in its own form, but it undergoes a transformation and becomes the individual self. And that the *jīva* is distinct and non-distinct from the supreme self. As long as it is distinct, it is associated with the transmigrating existence and as long as it is non-distinct, it is fit to be determined as "I am Brahman"; and in that case all objections will become removed.

Śrī Śaṅkara asserts that all common human dealings or Vedic observances are logical and valid prior to the realization of the identity of the self and Brahman. Without denying the vast phenomenal creation, he resorts to the process of transformation in so far as this can be made use of in the worship of the qualified Brahman.

The *Pūrṇatā* mantra ॐ पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं पूर्णात् पूर्णमुदच्यते । पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते।<sup>32</sup> says: That is full. This is full, for from the full, the full indeed arises. When the full is taken from the full, what remains is full indeed. This mantra itself supports the synthesis of the spirit and the matter. Śrī Śaṅkara explains this in the following manner: That itself is

this that is conditioned and that manifested with name and form; and while becoming subjected to a state of various dealings. Its conditioned form too is full i.e., it pervades in its own form as the supreme self not in the differentiated form, limited by adjuncts:

तत् सम्पूर्णमाकाशवद् व्यापि निरन्तरं निरुपाधिकं च तदेवेदं  
सोपाधिकं नाम रूपस्थं व्यवहारापन्नं पूर्णं स्वेन रूपेण परमात्मना  
व्याप्येव नोपाधिपरिच्छिन्नेन।<sup>33</sup> The *Praśnopanīṣadbhāṣya* states:  
सर्वात्मा सज्जगत्प्रक्षयति।<sup>34</sup> which means that by becoming the self  
of all, I will create the Universe. It shows that both the Being  
and the Becoming are one and the same.

In another context, it says that both the eater (*Prāṇa*) and the food (*Rāyī*) are but one, the distinction being one of secondary and the other primary. The *Upanīṣadic* mantra तत्सृष्ट्वा तदेवानुप्रविशत् means that which created Itself, by Itself, denotes that the self is both the object and the subject. Here the word 'itself' denotes the object and created by 'Itself' presents the subject. All that is with form grows and all that is formless is subtle; the form and the formless, constituting the food and the eater, is indeed, food. Here, life is identified with the Universe. Food and life are the two parts of the Lord. The *Taittirīyopanīṣad* also considers food as Brahman: अन्नं ब्रह्मेति व्यजानात् i.e. from food all these beings are born and after being born, they live on food, and they proceed to and become absorbed in food. Therefore it is logical that food (matter) is Brahman (spirit).

The synthesis of the spirit and the matter is well explained in the *Bhagavadgītā* also. In the 13th chapter Kṛṣṇa says that

the knowledge of the kṣetra (physical body) and its environment, and physical world i.e. matter and of the kṣetrajña, the knower of the world of objects (spirit), is true and complete knowledge according to Me. Here Śrī Śaṅkara says: Whatever being is born, either unmoving or moving, knows it to be due to the union of the field and field knower.

The concept of Hiranyagarbha also finds identity with all the creatures that undergo transmigratory existence. Hiranyagarbha is jīvaghaṇa. According to our Vedic Ṛṣis this Universe originated from the cosmic energy. This energy got converted into mass as Hiranyagarbha (cosmic golden egg). When it burst, subtle primordial matter of three guṇas started appearing; and when the same joined in appropriate proportion, gross universe was created in stages. By accepting this Śrī Śaṅkara holds that hiranyagarbha is one as well as many — एवमेकत्वं नानात्वं च हिरण्यगर्भस्य।<sup>35</sup> Hiranyagarbha is often regarded as the supreme in the śrutis and the smṛtis, but these texts present him as the transmigrating soul only very rarely. Generally, on account of an excess of impurity in the limiting adjuncts of the individual source, they are spoken as the transmigratory soul.

Establishing the identity of the Jīvātmā and the Paramātmā, Śrī Śaṅkara says: The individual self that entered into creation is nothing but the self that transcends the mundane existence — कार्यानुप्रविष्टो जीवःआत्मा पर एव असंसारी। He again states that this One that is found in man and that One abiding in the Sun are the same: यश्चायं पुरुषे यश्चासावादित्ये स एक इति।



The epistemological outlook of Śrī Śaṅkara is to perceive the unity beyond multiplicity and non-duality beyond duality. Śrī Śaṅkara defines each object of this world in order to make knowledge of multiplicity and through this the unreality of those things will be known and such knowledge leads to wisdom that is the state of unity. The ontological identity of Brahman and the world phenomenon is to be explained in relation to the empirical difference between the two. It is a fact that plants, animals and men are animate, and rocks, stones, etc. are inanimate. But all these are alike beings, eternal atoms born from the eternal cause. Subtle primordial matter is the cause of origin of gross matter. This primordial matter is the creative force — the spirit which hides behind all animate and inanimate things: सर्व विकारकारणत्वे सति सर्वशक्त्युपपत्तेः।<sup>36</sup>

Epistemologically, in an experience, two things are involved "I" and "You" i.e. the subject and the object. These two are completely different and are based on contents and qualities. But even then they are somehow mixed up and identified in the process of experience. In the introduction of the Brahmasūtrabhāṣya, Śrī Śaṅkara states that the Self is not absolutely beyond apprehension because 'It' is identified as the content of the concept 'I' (नायमेकान्तेनाविषयः।) and because the self is opposed to the non-self.

### The Subjective and Objective Vision of Brahman

The Advaita makes an enquiry into reality both from the objective and the subjective view points. Brahman is regarded as both subjective and objective. John Grim, who holds purely



an objective approach, will lead one to materialism and atheism. A purely subjective approach leads itself to the logical conclusion of subjectivism, solipsism and skepticism. This demands a synthetic analysis of the objective external world along with the subjective internal world. Śrī Śaṅkara holds that Brahman is assumed as the foundation of all, though it is not a substance in any sense of the word. Brahman is pure consciousness. Consciousness is the source and the end of everything. It is the radical and ultimate oneness of Reality. By the terms 'subject' and 'object', Śrī Śaṅkara means 'Ātman' and 'Anātman', the transcendental reality and the empirical existence. The ultimate consciousness is the subject and the object; and world is depended on it.

Whether this absolute is known or un-known is a great question. Brahman is self-luminous and it must surely be known. If it cannot be known, the scripture will be proven untrue and liberation will be rendered impossible. Śrī Śaṅkara answers this question by saying that Brahman is not a non object in an absolute sense. It is the object of the notion of the ego and it is immediately known by everyone. No one says: 'I do not exist'. Thus the 'I' notion of every one proves that Brahman is not unknown entirely. This 'I' will be revealed as the inner-most self of all and self-luminous by a proper analysis.

In his Brahmasūtrabhāṣya Śrī Śaṅkara says : Brahman is known not only from the etymological derivation but also because of the fact of its being the self of all. Everyone feels that he exists and no one feels that he or she does not exist.

Then the doubt arises why should one enquire into the already known? Śrī Śaṅkara clarifies: One should enquire about the already known because though the Brahman is known as the Self of all things, its nature is not fully understood. So Brahman being the subject and the object of knowledge it cannot be known itself.

तत्पुनर्ब्रह्म प्रसिद्धमप्रसिद्धं वा स्यात् यदि प्रसिद्धं न जिज्ञासितव्यम्। अथाऽप्रसिद्धं नैव शक्यं जिज्ञासितुमिति। उच्यते- अग्नितावद्ब्रह्म नित्यशुद्धबुद्धमुक्तस्वभावं, सर्वज्ञं, सर्वशक्तिममन्वितम्। ब्रह्मशब्दस्य हि व्युत्पाद्यमानस्य नित्यशुद्धत्वादयोऽर्थाः प्रतीयन्ते, बृहतेर्धातोरर्थानुगमात्। सर्वस्यात्मत्वाच्च ब्रह्मास्तित्वप्रसिद्धिः सर्वोद्ध्यात्माऽस्तित्वं प्रत्येति, न नाहमस्मीति। यदि हि नात्मास्तित्वप्रसिद्धिः स्यात् सर्वो लोको नाहमस्मीति प्रतीयात्। आत्मा च ब्रह्म।<sup>37</sup>

### The Ātman- as Subject

Brahman is suddhacaitanya. It is one only and without a second. This caitanya was revealed as essentially and fundamentally 'consciousness as' and not 'consciousness of'. But this Brahman is not merely an abstract remote entity.<sup>38</sup> The Ātman is Brahman -अयमात्मा ब्रह्म। It is not to be found as an ultimate object. Though one cannot know the knower, one can become the knower. The process is from an impersonal object to the personal subject. Thus the enquiry leads to a search for the Ātman, the ultimate subject. The Ātman testifies to the fact that the absolute is not a mentally constructed object, nor a transcendental concept, but an ever-present fact. An analysis of the Avasthātraya (Jāgrat, swapna and suṣupti), or the pancakośaviveka will reveal that the Self alone is present

throughout. The self is the foundation of all. In all states, the underlined consciousness remains the same. The purely subjective is the purely objective.

The Advaitins' unity is a denial of duality from the very beginning itself. The Advaita holds that there exists an ultimate unity deepseated within all subjects and objects. The entire manifold universe ultimately and essentially expresses this unity. Reality is not a mere unity, underlying the apparent diversity of the universe. Both unity and diversity are interrelated and have no individual existence of their own. The existence of facts, both subjective and objective, have inbuilt pre-suppositions regarding the nature of reality.

When we analyze the material phenomena and scan it by the dialectical method, we get the truth of the universe through the physical sciences, by studying the opposite objectively. But the other dimensions are not exhausted or studied in materialism. Spiritual truth must be apprehended through the dialectical approach or discriminating the assessment of reality in its non physical attributes. Thus we get the ultimate truth in its fullness rather than in partial projection only through the integral yoga and holistic perception of dialectics, scientists and spiritualists.

The Advaita admits multiplicity in the empirical point of view. Metaphysically there is the problem of the One and there exists a seeming plurality of things. There is a subject-object dichotomy and a problem of satya and anṛta in epistemological point of view. Even though ethically there is the problem of

Bandha and Nivṛtti, from the absolute point of view, Brahman — Ātman is one. It is non-duality. The concept of 'Aham' is itself Brahman. Brahman is nirupādhika and when he assumes Sopadhikacaitanya he is jīva. The material world is existent because its existence is based on the 'sat' or existence of 'samvit'. In all states namely jāgrat, swapna and suṣupti, shines forth the absolute consciousness, which is devoid of the characteristics of projection or withdrawal and continues, as there illuminates that absolute consciousness in the supreme self, which shines forth independently.

Reality is not eternity alone. That which is eternal, i.e. which exists in the three periods of time may not be real. The substance underlying a form or object is existent in the three periods of time, but its form does not endure. Hence such a form or object is not real. But the Ātman is one that exists not only in the three periods of time but also remains unchangeable in its nature. Though there is change of form and state in matter it is the Ātman itself. The Advaitins reach the non-dual Absolute which can be characterized as neither objective nor subjective through a synthetic analysis of these subjective and objective forms.

The identity of cause and effect, of subject and object, which appears in the Upaniṣads, has made the fundamental doctrine of the Vedanta or non-dual philosophy which is widely accepted in India today. The effect is not different from its material cause. The dualism of spirit and matter does not amount to a physical separation of the two entities, though there is the need to discriminate one from the other. The

concept of Antaryāmī (the indweller) also indicates the synthesis of spirit and matter. Śrī Śaṅkara's definition of the term Vedānta itself establishes the same: वेदानामन्तः अवसानं तत्त्वमस्यादि महावाक्यानि, तेषां तात्पर्यम्। समन्वयः।<sup>39</sup>

## Observations

The Advaita Vedānta lays great emphasis on proving both the immanence and the transcendence of Brahman. The Absolute is called Brahman or the Ātman, the transcendental unity underlying the subject and the object. According to Śrī Śaṅkara, the world is phenomenally real and not merely an idea as the Vijñānavādin supports. So the studies reveal that Śrī Śaṅkara is neither purely a subjectivist nor a subjective idealist because he believes in the objective reality of the world. However, he is also not purely an objectivist because he supports subjectivism in the state of knowledge of Brahman.

In this context, it must be admitted that cosmic consciousness is regarded as a corresponding state of individual consciousness and whatever is present in the individual is present in the universe and vice versa. The evolution of matter at all levels of phenomenal manifestation is but an aspect of the movement of consciousness. In fact there is probably no real distinction between material or scientific and spiritual good. The only difference between science and spirituality is that the spiritual mind is headed towards understanding the harmony of Nature and the scientific mind is concerned more with the facts of Nature. Hence, all the aspects of the macrocosm are present in the microcosm. It is clear that the two notions of existence and



manifestations are interrelated and complementary to each other. This non-duality is akin to Śrī Śaṅkara's Advaita Vedanta itself.

### References

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4. Ibid — III -14-4.
5. Br̥h. Up.-III- 8-8.
6. Ibid-II-3-1.
7. Subodhkapoor, (Edited), Encyclopedia of Upaniṣads and Its Philosophy, Vol-1, Cosmo Publications, New Delhi-2002, p.13.
8. Ch. Up.-III -19-1.
9. Ibid-III-19-3.
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23. Ch. Up. Sbh - VI-2-1.
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28. Bṛh. Up. Sbh. — II-9-20.
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30. Bṛh. Up. Sbh. — II-1-2.
31. B. S. Sbh- II-1-8.
32. Bṛh. Up - V-1-1.
33. Ibid. Sbh.
34. Praś. Up. Sbh- I.
35. Bṛh. Up. Sbh — I -4.
36. B. S. Sbh. — I-2-5.
37. Ibid - I-1-1.
38. Advaita Vedanta- Perspective on Language, John Grims  
p-79.
39. Lalitatriśatibhāṣya — 42.

## CHAPTER - 8

### Conclusion

Śrī Śaṅkarācārya, who established and propagated the doctrines of Advaita Vedanta all over India during the 8th or 9th C.A.D., is famous as a great Philosopher, Saint, Poet and so on. He is undoubtedly the most popular saintly philosopher of India and has made a name both within the country and outside. He has attained Sarvajñapeetha (the seat of all knowledge) for having acquired knowledge on all fields. The term 'Sarvajña' is meaningful to Śrī Śaṅkara in all respects. Explaining the omniscient Brahman, Śrī Śaṅkara gives an analogy in his Brahmasūtrabhāṣya: यद्यद्विस्तारार्थं शास्त्रं यस्मात्पुरुषविशेषात्सम्भवति, यथा व्याकरणादि पाणिन्यादेर्ज्ञेयैकदेशार्थमपि स ततोऽप्यधिकतरविज्ञान इति प्रसिद्धं लोके। It means that in the world it is a well-recognized fact that the person from whom the scriptures dealing with multifarious subjects emerge is more well-informed than the scriptures themselves. For instance, grammar, etc., emanating from Pāṇini and others indicate merely a part of the subject known to them. It is more appropriate to Śrī Śaṅkara himself. According to him śāstra is 'Jñānasādhana' — the source of knowledge. Even though the knowledge derived from the study of śāstra is not all, it plays a role that is unique in guiding the humanity,

except in the case of a man of self-realization. In India 'sāstra' means science.

In order to propagate his Advaitic message and intense ideas Śrī Śaṅkara travelled all over India and established four Maṭhas in the four corners of India, viz Dwaraka Maṭha in Dwaraka, Govardhana Maṭha in Puri, Jyothir Maṭha in Badarikāśram, and Śāradā Maṭha in Sṛngeri. He organized Daśanāmisampradāya such as Tīrta, Āśrama, Vana, Aranya, Giri, Parvata, Sagara, Saraswati, Bhārati and Puri for the guidance of these Maṭhas in all parts of India and they propagated his teachings on Advaita Vedanta and the ideas reflected in his works.

The two-fold missions of Śrī Śaṅkara to the world are: (1) The establishment of the fundamental spiritual concepts of Advaita Vedanta which are of a universal nature and which have a scientific and rational basis. The Advaita Vedanta helps the competent persons to start their search on Brahman and the attainment of Brahman. (2) Śrī Śaṅkara aimed at regenerating the Vedic dharma on the basis of Vedantic truth. This mission reveals that his vision was broad and integral and he synthesized the temporal and the eternal, the mundane and the spiritual and the empirical and the transcendental aspects. Through this he could solve the contemporary national problem. He showed the path of unity in diversity and of action in inaction.

The system of Advaita Vedanta, as propounded by Śrī Śaṅkara, derives this nomenclature from the fact that it

recognizes Brahman, the Absolute, as the only reality and denies permanent existence to the world as also to the individual souls. Śrī Śaṅkara's Advaita Vedānta is the science of life par excellence.

Śrī Śaṅkara's works, written in various forms viz. Bhāṣyas, prakaraṇas, stotras, tantras, etc. open out to mankind with unlimited wisdom. They stand as a challenge to blind materialists. His works are the treasury of thought. The Bhāṣyas written by Śrī Śaṅkara on Prasthānatraya, viz. the Upaniṣads, the Brahmasūtra and the Bhagavadgītā, are accepted as the most valuable products of the genius of mankind. Wherever Śrī Śaṅkara appeared, he stood first as he was brave in argument and stiff in debate. His Bhāṣyas, serve as a beacon of light. The language of his Bhāṣyas is simple, unambiguous and is easily comprehensible. He has also written Bhāṣyas on Sanatsujātīya, Viṣṇusahasranāmastotra, Lalitātrīṣati and the like. Being a Bhāṣyakāra on the Upaniṣads which are the inseparable parts of the Vedas, he may also be regarded as a Vedabhāṣyakāra. He states that one's knowledge will be complete only through the knowledge of karmakāṇḍa and Jñānakāṇḍa. Through his Bhāṣyas he establishes the statement सर्वं खल्विदं ब्रह्म ।

Śrī Śaṅkara is famous as a poet through his stotra granthas and his poetic skill reflects throughout his Bhāṣya granthas also. The usage of alaṅkāras, etymological explanations, propriety, etc. enhances the poetic beauty of his Bhāṣyas and these factors have helped him to spread his ideas among the common people. He tries to explain the nature of Brahman



not only with a spiritual bent of mind but also with a scientific temper.

Even though Śrī Śaṅkara knew nothing of physical science his approach is fundamentally scientific. His sincere dedication helped to explore certain scientific truths. He has discussed the functions of magnet (ayaskāntamaṇi), theory of dissolution (saindhavakhilya), theory of relativity and the like. These descriptions show his depth of knowledge on material objects and scientific theories. In addition to these, his physiological and psychological explanations have more significance. The heart and its functions, the nature of arteries, number of nerves and the nature of mind and the like indicate his physiological and psychological knowledge. Explanation on Pañcīkaraṇa in a scientific manner is another best example for his knowledge on material aspects. It is based upon the practice of discrimination, a discrimination to be applied to ourselves and to every circumstance and object of our experience as also on each moment of our life. His explanations on the material aspects and the process of Pañcīkaraṇa indicate his depth of knowledge on science.

Studies reveal that spirit cannot be separated from body. He makes use of empirical examples of cause and effect relation only to repudiate all real causality and to establish the Vedic non-dualism, their enunciation of Brahman as the birth, sustenance and dissolution of the world, being only a deliberate imputation of causal nature — a device to convince the critical enquirer that everywhere the so-called scientific cause is the only real entity imagined to appear in diverse

ways like an actor on the stage. It is proved that Pañcīkaraṇa has validity while discussing the theory of creation. Śrī Śaṅkara defines the nature of Brahman and its existence in a scientific way and this also points out that matter and spirit are impartial. Man is the epitome of the cosmos. There is a striking relation between the microcosm and the macrocosm in every phase of existence from the sthula and sūkṣma.

Śrī Śaṅkara's purpose is to amalgamate science and spirituality. Without the spiritual goal in view no one can be a karmayogi. Pravṛtti (related to material) and Nivṛtti (spiritual) are the two forms of the Vedic disciplines meant for the attainment of prosperity and happiness and for the attainment of the reality. It should be noted that Nivṛtti does not mean giving up of all activities and possessions. The main condition for the way of renunciation is freedom from desires for all that is transitory and longing for the eternal. A person may have the spirit of renunciation even though living in the family. Man is capable of living on five different levels of life — spiritual, moral, intellectual, aesthetic, and physical. Of these the spiritual is the highest, the physical the lowest.

Wealth and pleasure belong to pravṛttimarga, and mokṣa to Nivṛttimārga. Virtue is common to both. No spiritual opening is possible without virtue. It is indispensable to material welfare also. Any progress in life is not secure without a spiritual basis. So the material well-being finally depends on spiritual idealism. The fulfillment of human life is not in material progress, nor intellectual achievement, nor aesthetic

delight, nor moral development, but in spiritual attainment. Through the realization of his innate self one becomes free from all bondages, suffering and delusion.

Advaita Vedanta places great emphasis on proving both the immanence and the transcendence of Brahman. The absolute is known as Brahman or the  $\bar{A}$ tman, the transcendent unity underlying the subject and the object. It is clear that Śrī Śaṅkara is neither purely subjectivist nor a subjective idealist because he believes in the objective reality of the world. He is also not purely an objectivist because he supports subjectivism in the state of knowledge of Brahman in which the world is merely idealistic. Hence he is both a subjectivist and an objectivist. His statement in the *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* अस्मत्प्रत्ययगोचरे विषयिणि चिदात्मके युष्मत्प्रत्ययस्य तद्धर्माणां चाध्यासः। supports this view.

According to Advaita Vedanta the  $\bar{A}$ dhyatmikā, the  $\bar{A}$ dhibhoutikā and the  $\bar{A}$ dhidaivikā planes are also time - space causation factors, all being co-existent and inseparable appear as well as disappear together. Advaita teaches the aspirant that his waking world can be divided into the above mentioned three planes.

The cultivation of virtue is as essential to material well being as it is to spiritual unfolding. At the outset, the practice of virtue enables the seeker of prosperity to enjoy life's blessings, to realize their inherent deficiency and to turn to something beyond, something that never fails, something that is flowless, limitless, free and blissful.

Nowadays, Man is enamoured and controlled by excessive materialism. His every action is characterized by such a spirit. Action is often correlated to inaction. Both should not be treated differently. It is through this inactive action that great sages including Śrī Śaṅkara paved the way for national revival and preserved spirituality. This kind of concomitant ideology is something that is required today. Even the work performed by one seeking the world's welfare is metaphysically no work at all, for the knowledge of Brahman has wiped out all his karma. So inaction means not the complete withdrawal of karma.

Śrī Śaṅkara argues that though apparently reflections are many in number, the pure consciousness is only a single being. This pure consciousness is the eternally witnessing principle beyond both the empirical subject and object and their relationship with time and space. Human personality consists of three distinct factors, body, mind (physical) and spirit which are inter-related. But man is not the point of unity of these factors; he is the embodied spirit itself. That is the Advaita of Śrī Śaṅkara.

His scientific views also point out that matter and spirit are indivisible and we cannot explain spirit (the Ātman) without matter, as they are the two sides of one eternal entity; and he establishes this notion through the statement 'जीवो ब्रह्मैव नापरः।' i.e. the world (material) and the jīva (spiritual) are not different from Brahman that harmonizes spirit and matter. Hence the Advaita Vedanta of Śrī Śaṅkara is a system of material, social and spiritual sciences, all rolled into one. In fact, the Advaita Vedanta exists as the very kernel of the whole system.

## Appendix - I

### BIOGRAPHIES OF ŚRĪ ŚAṆKARA,

1. Bṛhacchankaravijaya (I)-Chitsukharya (not available) :  
Quotations from this book are seen in other Śaṅkaravijayas.
2. Bṛhacchankaravijaya (II)- Ānanda Jñāna
3. Prācīna Śaṅkaravijaya — Unknown author
4. Śaṅkaravijaya —I — Brāhmaṇanda (unpublished)
5. Śaṅkaravijaya —2 — Vyāsacala- available in print
6. Śaṅkaravijaya —3 — Anantānanda Giri
7. Śaṅkaradigvijaya- Madhava (Madhavecyā samkshēpa  
Śaṅkara vijaya- (available in print)
8. Śaṅkaravijayavilāsa — 1 Cidvilasa - available in print)
9. Śrī Śaṅkarācāryacaritam — 1- Govindanantha (available  
in print)
10. Śaṅkarābhyudaya -1 — Rajacudāmaṇi Dikṣit
11. Śaṅkarābhyudaya — II — Nilakanṭha
12. Śaṅkara Mandārasaurabha —
13. Guruvamśakāvya — Kasi Lakshmana Sastri
14. Ācāryavijayam- Parameswara Kaṇṭhirava
15. Puṇyaślokamañjari- Sarvajña Sadasiva Bodhendra  
Saraswati
16. Gururatnamālastava— Paramahansa Sadasiva Brahmendra  
Saraswati



17. Keralīya Śaṅkaravijaya (Ācāyra caritam) — Unknown author

(Quotations found in other works only)

18. Śaṅkaravijayavilāsa — II — Saraswata Sadananda

19. Ācāyradigvijaya — Vādhula Vallee Sahaya Kavi

20. Śaṅkaravijayasamgraha — Purushottambharati.

21. Śaṅkarācāryacaritam — II — Ānantakavi

22. Śaṅkaradigvijayasāra — Vraja Raja

23. Śaṅkaradigvijaysāra — Govindachala

24. Śaṅkaravijaysāra — Kaśi Sadandakavi

25. Śaṅkarācāryotpatti — Unknown author

26. Patanjalicarita — Ram Bhadra Dikṣita

27. Keralotpatti — a Malayalam work by - Unknown author

28. Śrī Vidyārṇavatāntra — Vidyaranya Yati

### Stotras

Totakāṣṭaka written by Totakācāyra, the Gurvaṣṭaka of Citsukhācārya

Padmapāda, Sureśwara, Vācaspati Miśra and many other Advaita writers have written verses praising the Ācāyra

### Miscellaneous

- i) Āryavidyā Sudhākara- A Manual of the Rituals to be Performed by Brahmins.
- ii) Kongudeśa — Rajakkan charitam- A Tamil Annal of the Later Medieval Period

- iii) Annals like the Guruparampara Stotras preserved in different Śaṅkaracharya Maṭhas.

## Purāṇas

- i) Śivarahasya Purāṇa (the 16<sup>th</sup> chapter of its 9<sup>th</sup> section)
- ii) Markaṇḍeya Samhitā — A Purāṇa (in the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> chapters of its 72<sup>nd</sup> part)
- iii) Kūrma Purāṇa (27<sup>th</sup> chapter)
- iv) Bhaviṣyottara Purāṇa (36<sup>th</sup> Chapter)
- v) Linga Purāṇa - (40<sup>th</sup> chapter)
- vi) Śiva Purāṇa
- vii) Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa
- viii) Bhairava Purāṇa
- ix) Brahmānda Purāṇa

28. Śaṅkara vijaya makaranda- Dr. S.V. Radhakrisna Sastri (a collection of verses from popularly known Śaṅkara vijayas, the philosophical manuals, the Stotrāgranthas of Śrī Śaṅkara and other philosophical works of Advaita writers.)

29. **Hostile accounts** - Unfavorable references to the personality of Śrī Śaṅkara found in the very late Advaita works such as Mādhavavijaya and Maṇimanjari of Nārāyaṇacārya and in The History of Buddhism in India by Taranatha.

## Appendix - II

### WORKS OF ŚRĪ ŚAṆKARA

Appended below is a list of books attributed to Śrī Śaṅkara which are included in the Śrī Śaṅkaravijaya makaranda compiled by Vaidya S.V. Radhakrishna Śāstri. The authenticity of many books mentioned below is still in doubt.

Samata Books, Madras, has also brought out a revised edition of the Complete Works of Śrī Śaṅkara in ten volumes. These include the bhāṣyas on the prasthānatrayī, five minor bhāṣyas, thirty-three Prakaraṇas, sixty-five Stotras and the Prapañcasāra. The total number of works thus amounts to 117.

#### भाष्यग्रन्थाः

- १ भगवद्गीताभाष्यम्
- २ तैत्तिरीयोपनिषद् भाष्यम्
- ३ हस्तामलकीय भाष्यम्
- ४ विष्णुसहस्रनामस्तोत्र भाष्यम्
- ५ माण्डूक्यकारिकाभाष्यम्
- ६ ब्रह्मसूत्रभाष्यम्
- ७ सनत्सुजातीयभष्यम्
- ८ ईशावास्योपनिषद्भाष्यम्
- ९ केनोपनिषद् भाष्यम्
- १० कठोपनिषद् भाष्यम्
- ११ प्रश्नोपनिषद् भाष्यम्

- १२ मुण्डकोपनिषद् भाष्यम्
- १३ ऐतरेयोपनिषद् भाष्यम्
- १४ छान्दोग्योपनिषद् भाष्यम्
- १५ बृहदारण्यकोपनिषद् भाष्यम्
- १६ नृसिंहपूर्वतापिनी उपनिषद्भाष्यम्
- १७ नृसिंहोत्तरतापिनी उपनिषद्भाष्यम्
- १८ श्वेताश्वतरोपनिषद् भाष्यम्
- १९ अथर्वशिखोपनिषद् भाष्यम्
- २० वज्रसूच्युपनिषद् भाष्यम्
- २१ सर्वोपनिषत्सारः

#### व्याख्याग्रन्थाः

- २२ ज्ञानांकुशव्याख्याविवरणम्
- २३ लळितात्रिशतीभाष्यम्
- २४ आपस्तम्बधर्मसूत्रभाष्यम्
- २५ पातञ्जलयोगसूत्रभाष्यविवरणम्

#### स्तोत्रग्रन्थाः

- २६ सुब्रह्मण्य भुजङ्गम्
- २७ देवी भुजङ्गम्
- २८ कनकधारास्तवम्
- २९ अच्युताष्टकम्
- ३० गुरुपादुकपञ्चकम्
- ३१ नर्मदाष्टकम्
- ३२ काशीपञ्चकम्

- ३३ गङ्गाष्टकम्
- ३४ मणिकर्णिकाष्टकम्
- ३५ द्वादशलङ्गस्तोत्रम्
- ३६ वेदसारशिवस्तोत्रम्
- ३७ शिवनामावल्यष्टकम्
- ३८ शिवपञ्चाक्षरस्तोत्रम्
- ३९ अन्नपूर्णाष्टकम्
- ४० कालभैरवाष्टकम्
- ४१ षट्पदी
- ४२ शिवभुजङ्गम्
- ४३ विष्णुसहस्रनामस्तोत्रम्
- ४४ गोविन्दाष्टकम्
- ४५ कृष्णाष्टकम्
- ४६ मातृपञ्चकम्
- ४७ यमुनाष्टकम् (प्रथमं)
- ४८ यमुनाष्टकम् (द्वितीयं)
- ४९ नरसिंहाष्टकम्
- ५० दक्षिणामूर्ति स्तोत्रम्
- ५१ दक्षिणामूर्त्यष्टकम्
- ५२ निर्गुणमानसपूजा
- ५३ दक्षिणामूर्तिवर्णमाला
- ५४ आर्याष्टकम्
- ५५ रत्नपुष्पाञ्जलिस्तोत्रम्



- ५६ शिवनन्दलहरी
- ५७ शिवपादादिकेशान्तवर्णनस्तोत्रम्
- ५८ शिवकेशादिपादान्तवर्णनस्तोत्रम्
- ५९ सुवर्णमालास्तुति
- ६० साम्पदशश्लोकी
- ६१ उमामहेश्वर स्तोत्रम्
- ६२ भ्रमराष्टकम्
- ६३ अर्धनारीश्वरस्तवः
- ६४ त्रिपुरसुन्दरीमानसपूजास्तोत्रम्
- ६५ शारदाभुजङ्गम्
- ६६ गौरीदशकम्
- ६७ भवानीभुजङ्गम्
- ६८ हरिमीडेस्तुतिः
- ६९ मीनाक्षीस्तोत्रम्
- ७० त्रिपुरसुन्दर्यष्टकम्
- ७१ राजभुजङ्गम्
- ७२ हनुमत्पञ्चरत्नम्
- ७३ गङ्गेशपञ्चरत्नम्
- ७४ गणेशभुजङ्गम्
- ७५ रङ्गनाथाष्टकम्
- ७६ मातृकापुष्पमालास्तोत्रम्
- ७७ नवरत्नमालिका
- ७८ मृत्युञ्जयमानसिकपूजास्तोत्रम्

- ७९ विष्णुपादादिकेशान्तस्तोत्रम्
- ८० शिवपञ्चाक्षरनक्षत्रमालास्तोत्रम्
- ८१ कल्याणवृष्टिस्तवः
- ८२ शिवापराधक्षमापणस्तोत्रम्
- ८३ देवीचतुष्ट्युपचारपूजास्तोत्रम्
- ८४ मन्त्रमातृकपुष्पमालास्तवः
- ८५ श्यामलानवरत्नमालिका
- ८६ त्रिपुरसुन्दरीवेदपादस्तवः
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- ८८ पाण्डुरङ्गाष्टकम्
- ८९ भगवन्मानसपूजा
- ९० जगन्नाथाष्टकम्
- ९१ लळितापञ्चरत्नम्
- ९२ श्रीमत्क्रमस्तवः
- ९३ सैन्दर्य लहरी

#### वेदन्तादि प्रकरण ग्रन्थाः

- ९४ प्रपञ्चसारः
- ९५ निर्वाणशतकम्
- ९६ अद्वैतपञ्चरत्नम् (आत्मपञ्चकम् वा)
- ९७ दशश्लोकी
- ९८ योगतारावली
- ९९ स्वात्मनिरूपणम्
- १०० विवेकचूडामणी

- १०१ निर्वाणषड्कम्
- १०२ अद्वैतानुभूतिः
- १०३ ब्रह्मानुचित्तनम्
- १०४ सदाचारानुसन्धानम्
- १०५ मनीषापञ्चकम्
- १०६ तत्त्वोपदेशः
- १०७ वाक्यवृत्तिः
- १०८ धन्याष्टकम्
- १०९ जीवन्मुक्तानन्दलहरी
- ११० यतिपञ्चकम्
- १११ सर्ववेदान्तसारसङ्ग्रहः
- ११२ अपरोक्षानुभूतिः
- ११३ प्रबोधसुधाकरः
- ११४ उपदेशसाहस्री
- ११५ पञ्चीकरणम्
- ११६ आत्मबोधः
- ११७ दुर्वासनाप्रतिकारदशकम्
- ११८ स्वात्मप्रकाशिका
- ११९ स्वरूपानुसन्धानम्
- १२० मायापञ्चकम्
- १२१ शतश्लोकी
- १२२ प्रौढानुभूतिः
- १२३ ब्रह्मज्ञानावलीमाला

१२४ निर्वाणमञ्जरी

१२५ प्रश्नोत्तरमालिका

१२६ एकश्लोकी

१२७ भजगोविन्दम्

१२८ बालबोधसंग्रहः

१२९ त्रिपुटी

१३० अनुभवोल्लासः

१३१ सहजाष्टकम्

१३२ चिदानन्दात्मकस्तोत्रम्

१३३ सोपानपञ्चकम् (उपदेश पञ्चकं, साधन पञ्चकं वा)

इतरे प्रकरणग्रन्थाः

१३४ लघुवाक्य वृत्तिः

१३५ अनात्मश्रीविगर्हणम्

१३५ प्रातस्मरणस्तोत्रम्

१३६ अखण्डैकरसवक्त्यार्थः

१३७ अद्वैतमानसिकपूजा

१३८ अध्यात्मविद्योपदेशविधिः

१३९ अध्यात्मसन्यासविधिः

१४० अष्टश्लोकी

१४१ आत्मचिन्तनम्

१४२ आत्मज्ञानोपदेशविधिः

१४३ आत्मानात्मविवेकः

१४४ आत्मसाम्राज्यसिद्धिः

- १४५ अवधूताष्टकम्
- १४६ एकादशोत्तरशतवाक्यग्रन्थः
- १४७ एकान्तनिर्णयः
- १४८ ज्ञानसन्यासः
- १४९ निरञ्जनाष्टकम्
- १५० पञ्चकोशविवेकः
- १५१ पञ्चीकरणभाष्यम्
- १५२ पञ्चीकरणमहावाक्यम्
- १५३ पञ्चीकृतम्
- १५४ परमानन्ददीपिका
- १५५ प्रणवभाष्यम्
- १५६ ब्रह्मनामावली
- १५७ ब्रह्मानुसन्धानम्
- १५८ बालबोधिनी
- १५९ मतखण्डनम्
- १६० महावाक्यमन्त्रः
- १६१ महावाक्यविवरणम्
- १६२ महावाक्यार्थपञ्चीकरणम्
- १६३ महावाक्यार्थ विचारः
- १६४ महावाक्यार्थ विवरणम्
- १६५ महावाक्यार्थोपदेशः
- १६६ महावाक्यनिर्णयः
- १६७ मायाविवरणम्



- १६८ राजयोगसूत्रभाष्यम्
- १६९ वाक्यदीपिका
- १७० वाक्यसुधा
- १७१ वेदन्ततत्त्वसारः
- १७२ वेदन्तशास्त्रप्रकरणम्
- १७३ सर्वसिद्धान्तसंग्रहः
- १६४ स्वानुभवप्रकरणम्
- १६५ तत्त्वबोधः
- १६६ मणिरत्नमाला
- १६७ मुमुक्षुपञ्चकम्
- १६८ वैराग्यपञ्चकम्

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